Use of a School-based Audit Tool for Guiding Anti-racism Education in Schools: A Pilot Assessment

by

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Abstract

The negative health impacts of racism and race-based discrimination have been well established within the public health literature. Though public health acknowledges racism and education as determinants of health, the field has failed to adequately address the health-harming impacts of racism within the education system, and thus has underutilized anti-racism work as a preventative and health equity strategy. This project piloted a school-based audit tool to assess school policies and practices for supporting cultural diversity and addressing race-based discrimination in two Alberta junior high schools to explore how an audit could be useful in guiding the development of anti-racism education. The study found that the utilization of an audit tool can help to begin a process of formalized discussion and raising awareness about interpersonal and institutional racism within educational contexts; however, the tool needs to be paired with action-oriented steps to successfully address racism as a determinant of health and education.

Keywords: Race-based discrimination; cultural diversity; racism; anti-racism education; health inequities

This thesis is dedicated to Charlene Hay for her ongoing dedication and commitment to the struggle against racism, particularly in the field of education.

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Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Frontier College for the donation of 100 books to both of my schools.

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List of Acronyms

ELL   English Language Learners

FNMI   First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

LA   Language Arts

PD   Professional Development

Glossary

Anti-racism	"A conscious and deliberate action – both individual and collective – that challenges the impact and perpetuation of White racial power, positions, and privilege in institutional, cultural, and individual settings" (Duffy, 2011, p. 38).
Anti-Racism Education	An action-oriented educational strategy for institutional, systemic change to address racism and interlocking systems of social oppression. It is a critical discourse of race and racism in society that challenges the continuance of racializing social groups for different and unequal treatment. Anti-racism explicitly names the issue of race and social difference as issues of power and equity, rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety (Dei, 2000, p. 27).
Cultural Diversity	The term has been used loosely to refer the wide range of human qualities and attributes within, but more often between, groups often based on dimensions of race, culture, language, religion, and ethnicity (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2013; Greco, Paradies, Priest, 2011).
Equity	Equity in its broad sense is justice and fairness. Equity work addresses the relative disadvantages produced by social categories of race, gender, sexuality, ability, language, culture, and religion. The goal of equity is for all individuals to have the opportunity to participate fully and to experience human dignity while developing knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society (Centre for Race and Culture, 2004).
Equity in Education	Equity education is an active process that works to oppose societal inequities caused by systems of oppression (racism, sexism, heterosexism, capitalism, etc.). It involves staff having an understanding of how social, political, and economic forces shape access and achievement patterns for students, as well as how school structures (e.g. policies, curriculum, hiring practices) can reinforce and perpetuate inequities. An equitable education system means a system that is fair and just to all. Equity does not mean equal treatment towards students, as equal treatment implies that everyone is starting from the same place. Rather equitable education takes action to ameliorate disadvantages in order to bring students onto a more level playing field (Centre for Race and Culture, 2004).
Health Equity	The fair distribution of resources needed for health and fair access to opportunities available to achieve optimal health and wellbeing for all (Whitehead & Dahlgren, 2006).
Health Inequity	Differences in access to resources for health and health outcomes that are avoidable, unfair and systemically related to social inequality and disadvantage (Gardner, 2008).

Race	Within this thesis, race is defined as a relational category, socially constructed by humans in certain historical and material conditions for political interests and regulatory power over groups of individuals. Social significance is thereby attached to biological features (such as skin colour), and people sharing these features are defined as a distinct group. Race as a construct is perpetuated through social structures and cultural representations that work to maintain power over groups of people in society (Dhamoon, 2009; Omi & Winant, 1994).
Race-based Discrimination	"Behaviours or practices that result in avoidable and unfair inequalities across groups in society based on race, ethnicity, culture or religion" (Greco, Paradies, Priest, 2011, p. 5).
Racialization	The process by which racial categories are constructed as different and unequal, in ways that have social, economic, health and political consequences (Galabuzi, 2006).
Racism	Racism is one form of oppression among many (for example: sexism, heterosexism, ageism, classism, ableism) that privileges certain groups over others within Canadian society. Within this study, racism is defined as a societal system in which there is uneven power distribution (or production) among socially-defined racial groups (Paradies, 2006). Many scholars conceptualize racism as existing on three levels: the institutional/systemic level, interpersonal level, and internalized level (Jones, 2000; Paradies, 2006). Institutional/systemic level racism is often the most difficult to identify because it is embedded within social structures of societies, creating differential access to resources, opportunities, information, voice, and power between groups of people (Jones, 2000). Since it is embedded within social structures, it appears 'normal' or provides an illusion that differential access is simply inherited disadvantage (Jones, 2000). Interpersonal level racism is the most commonly thought of form of racism, where one individual or group engages in prejudiced thoughts and/or discriminatory actions towards other individuals or groups (Jones, 2000). Finally, internalized racism is the acceptance of racial stereotypes, negative thoughts and ideas of one's racial group (Jones, 2000).

Prologue: My Body in the Research

I write this thesis from the position as a White, English/Danish decedent, Canadian woman, Masters in Public Health student. I recognize that my position is one that carries with it significant socioeconomic and racial privileges, and also many blinders, and my knowledge, understandings, and writings have been informed by my position and lived experiences to date. As Dei (2000) writes, "Reading the world is a political act in which we, the readers, must account for how we come to appreciate and interrogate established hegemonic ways of knowing" (p.25). I want to recognize that I bring only one perspective to this research topic and acknowledge this discursive space must be shared with others, in particular the voices of racialized peoples.

As I struggle with my position of White privilege in the anti-racism field, a line by Dei (2000) has really stood out to me, "anti-racism entails a recognition of the individual and collective responsibility to use multiple positions and differential locations of power, privilege and social disadvantage to work for change" (p. 25). Reflecting on this quote has helped me to realize that certain privileges of my identity can be used strategically and effectively in anti-racism work. There are times when my position as a White, formally educated individual grants me access to certain spaces or conversations in which others may be denied that I can use to leverage attention towards anti-racism work. It is through work in the field, conversations with colleagues, and racialized peoples that I continue to learn how to navigate the space as a White individual in the anti-racism field and use it for positive change.

I would also like to acknowledge that I am writing in the field of education as an outsider. I have no formal training or experience as a teacher, administrator, or support person within the education system; rather I come from a health promotion and public health background. Throughout my education and work I have come to see how interconnected health and education are, and thus truly believe future public health work needs to bring these fields closer together.

1.   Introduction

> Vulnerable and marginalized groups in society bear an undue proportion of health problems. Many health disparities are rooted in fundamental social structural inequalities, which are inextricably related to racism and other forms of discrimination in society…Overt or implicit discrimination violates one of the fundamental principles of human rights and often lies at the roots of poor health status**.** (World Health Organization, 2001)

The public health literature has clearly demonstrated the negative health impacts of racism and race-based discrimination on the daily lives of individuals, families and communities (Harris et al., 2011; Paradies, 2012). The growth of academic scholarship on racism and health has led to the naming of racism as a determinant of health (Mikkon & Raphael, 2010; WHO, 1986). The public health literature also thoroughly documents education as one of *the* primary determinants of health. As articulated by Freudenberg and Ruglis (2007), "education is one of the strongest predictors of health: the more [formal] schooling people have the better their health is" (p. 1). Public health to date has failed to adequately make the connection and address the health-harming effects of systemic racism within the education system, particularly for Aboriginal and racialized students. Thus, anti-racism work in education is currently underutilized by public health as a strategy for preventative and equitable health action.

There is increasing evidence supporting schools as a key setting to conduct anti-racism work, and increasing recognition that school-based, anti-racism efforts have the potential to reduce race-based discrimination and promote intercultural understanding (Mansoui et al., 2009). Schools have been suggested as key settings because they work with large populations of children and youth who are at developmental stages that allow for the opportunity to influence and change behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes (Greco, Paradies, & Preist, 2011). Using a "school settings" approach towards anti-racism work parallels well with current movements in Canadian public health aiming to decrease poor and inequitable health outcomes through a "healthy settings approach" (Doherty & Dooris, 2006). The healthy settings approach adopts a holistic model towards health by

considering broad determining factors of health and by focusing on improving settings to make them more health promoting (Doherty & Dooris, 2006). Through the mutual lens of a "school settings" approach, public health can therefore not only strengthen the argument for anti-racism work for beneficial educational outcomes, but also for long-term health outcomes.

Although there is support in the literature for the success of anti-racism work in schools, a key challenge identified by some anti-racism educators and activists is having schools and school boards/districts recognize and acknowledge racism as an issue, and more specifically, recognize racism as a systemic issue within the institution of education (C. Hay, personal communication, July 19, 2013; NAARR, 2004; Pauchulo, 2013). Many educators, support staff, and administrators will admit to instances of racial conflict, harassment or violence; however racial conflict often goes under-reported (McCaskell, 1993). Anti-racism activist Tim McCaskell (1993) argues that the failure to report incidents and draw higher-level administrative attention to the issue of racism has resulted in a denial of racism and has "led to the common response by school boards that 'race is not a problem'" (p.241).

Audits tools are one organizational assessment strategy being explored as a way for organizations and institutions to identify systemic racism. A recent report by Pauchulo (2013) conducted for the Centre for Race and Culture examined best practices in anti-racism education across Canada. The report identified seven themes of successful anti-racism initiatives. First among these themes is the collection of baseline information and needs assessment research. School-based audit tools are one way to collect baseline and needs assessment data of a schools' policies, practices, and procedures. Further exploration of school-based audits tools can provide insight into their usefulness as a strategy for school staff to identify, discuss, and act on racism and discrimination.

This thesis argues that the elimination of institutional racism in the education system is not only a priority for improving educational outcomes and academic engagement of students (and specifically racialized and Aboriginal students), but has great promise as a preventative public health and health equity intervention to promote a healthier society and reduce population-level social inequities in health.

1.1. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research project was to pilot a school-based audit tool with a core group of staff, in two urban Alberta junior high schools. Specifically I assessed the usefulness of the audit tool in guiding the development of anti-racism education within the school setting, and obtained staff suggestions for further revisions to the tool for future use within the Alberta context.

This project sought to answer the following primary and secondary research questions:

How can a school-based audit tool be useful in guiding the development of anti-racism education within the school setting? More specifically,

a. How does the school-based audit tool illicit information about the strengths and weaknesses of school policies, practices, and procedures that support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination?

b. How can a school-based audit tool be used as a strategy for initiating discussion and reflection on supporting diversity and addressing race-based discrimination within the school environment?

c. How do staff utilize the pilot of the school-based audit tool to develop future action plans that support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination in the school setting?

d. What are staff suggestions for revisions of the school-based audit tool and audit process for future use within the Alberta public school context?

# 2.	Literature Review

Within this chapter I review previous research on organizational assessment tools, specifically focusing on audit tools, as an approach to encourage anti-racism education practice. Before exploring organizational assessment tools, however, I provide a brief overview of the literature on the effects of racism on health and education, setting the context for why anti-racism education is not only important for improving educational outcomes but is also an important public health intervention to reduce population level social inequities in health.

## 2.1.	Racism as a Determinant of Health

> There is a growing body of evidence that persistent low-level harassment affects the health and wellbeing of people subjected to it. It leaves physical and psychological scars which are passed on from person to person in the community and remembered by generations to come. Living in fear because one belongs to a race or a group of people who are subjected to violence and constant harassment is a major cause of [poor] mental health and low self-esteem. (Mukami McCrum, Director, Central Scotland Race Equality Council, n.d.)

Racism has been identified as a social determinant of health at both the international and national levels (Paradies et al., 2013; Willams & Mohammed, 2009). In their final report, the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health recognized race as a key contributor to socio-economic positioning, which is a fundamental determinant of health (CSDH, 2008). Mikkonen and Raphael (2010), leading scholars in social determinants of health in Canada, have added racism to their updated list of key determinants of health for the Canadian population. Mikkonen and Raphael (2010) argue, "racialized Canadians experience a whole range of adverse living circumstance that threaten not only their health but also the overall health and well-being of the Canadian society" (p. 47). Canadian research has found that individual experiences of racism are more detrimental to the overall self-

reported health for non-European immigrants than European immigrants to Canada (De Maio & Kemp, 2010). For a country where one in five people are immigrants, and with approximately 75% of immigrants belonging to a visible minority group[1], a large portion of the Canadian population is at-risk for experiencing detrimental health impacts from racism (Hyman, 2009; Malenfant, Lebel, & Martel 2010).

With the recognition of racism as a determinant of health, there has been increasing interest and research in recent years on documenting the impacts of racism and racial discrimination on mental and physical health, health behaviours and overall well-being of individuals and populations (Paradies et al., 2009). A systematic review of 138 population-based studies on self-reported racism and health found strong support for associations between self-reported racism and negative mental health outcomes (in particular depression, emotional distress, and anxiety), and health behaviours (cigarette smoking and substance use); and moderate evidence for an association between self-reported racism and physical health outcomes (i.e. hypertension, low infant birth weight) (Paradies, 2006). Racism also was found to have negative impacts on health in that it can restrict access to resources for obtaining health, such as restricting access to opportunities for education, employment and housing (Paradies, 2006).

A number of other recent reviews and analyses focusing on specific population groups (Asian-Americans, African-Americans, Latinos, and children) have found similar results to Paradies' review (Gee et al., 2009; Lee & Ahn, 2011; Pieterse et al., 2012; Priest et al., 2013). A consistent positive correlation between racial discrimination and poor mental health was found across all the reviews, indicating that there an abundance of evidence demonstrating that racism negatively affects mental health (Gee et al., 2009; Lee & Ahn, 2011; Pieterse et al., 2012; Priest et al., 2013). Specific research on self-reported racism in children and youth has also found that race-based discrimination can have particularly detrimental effects on the health and overall well-being of youth, which can carry-on throughout the lifecourse into adulthood (Brody et al., 2006; Caughey, O'Campo & Muntaner, 2004). Knowing the long-term health impacts of racism on youth and children is pertinent for making the case as to why educational institutions and other

1 The Canadian Government defines visible minorities as 'persons other than Aboriginal
    peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in colour (Statistics Canada, 2004).

institutions, which support the development of children and youth, must address and work towards eliminating racism.

As demonstrated above, there has been significant academic literature documenting the association between self-reported racism and health. The depth of literature on this topic has established a firm evidence base for negative health effects due to racism and racial discrimination, specifically for racialized populations. Gee and Ford (2011), however, argue a main limitation of the studies on self-reported measures is their "disproportion[al] focus on individual experiences" (p.116). A focus on individual experiences of racism has meant that the "broader-reaching aspects of structural racism remain under-studied" despite wide-spread knowledge that racism operates at multiple levels from the individual to the institutional to the structural (Gee & Ford, 2011, p. 116; Jones, 2000). Institutional racism is embedded in all institutions ranging from health institutions (hospitals), legal institutions (justice system), to educational institutions (schools, universities/colleges, and school Boards/Districts). Gee and Ford (2011) express concern that without more work examining aspects of structural racism, and how it is produced and maintained within institutions, inequitable health patterns will continue to exist.

The next section situates educational institutions as a site for systemic racism and reviews the literature on racism in education and educational inequities in Alberta.

2.2. Racism in Educational Institutions

> In western countries like Canada, the USA, the UK, and Australia, students who do not belong to the dominant ethnic (Anglo) group routinely have to overcome significant barriers if they are to succeed in these countries' educational institutions…While racism has undoubtedly always existed in some form or another in schools, it has become more obvious in recent ties, particularly with the increase in diversity in Western countries. (Ryan, 2010, p.149)

Racism within the education system has been well documented by academics such as Dei (1997), Solomon and Palmer (2004), Zine (2005), Tato and Henry (2006), and Ryan (2010). Racism is embedded within the entire education system and exists in both overt and covert ways. Overt forms of racism are most often displayed through acts

of verbal harassment, racial jokes or slurs, and physical harassment or violence. Covert forms of racism are often hidden within school policies that limit minority students' academic advancement, teacher bias that results in low expectations for racialized students, exclusion of racialized students from taking positions of leadership, Eurocentric curriculums, disciplinary practices, and many other facets of the educational institution (Dei, 1997; NAARR, 2004; Ryan, 2010; Pauchulo, 2013). Because covert forms of racism are often hidden, they are often not thought of as discriminatory but rather as 'just the way things are' (Pauchulo, 2013). The disguise of covert forms of racism is one of the key challenges to identifying and addressing it within educational institutions. Both covert and overt forms of racism can occur between students, students and staff, administrators and teachers, school staff and parents, and each of the mentioned players and the institution (Ryan, 2010).

Experiences of racism have left students feeling 'angry and frustrated,' disconnected from the school community, and have been associated with low school attendance and early school leaving (Dei, 1997; Mansouri et al., 2009). Additionally, students who experience racism often feel excluded, alienated, and unsafe within their school environment (Hare and Pidgeon, 2011). As Dei (2006) further emphasizes, "despite its notable success, the public education system fails many students, as evidence by the disengagement, failure and high drop-out rates for Black, Aboriginal, and other minority youth" (p.27). The outcome of educational racism has led to inequitable high school completion rates, and subsequently, to inequitable entry into post-secondary school among racialized, and particularly Black and Aboriginal students (Dei, 2006).

The next section looks more specifically at the data on the Alberta context and Alberta high school completion rates.

2.3. The Alberta Context

Alberta is one of ten Canadian provinces and is situated within the prairie region of the West. According to the 2006 Canadian census, Alberta had an immigrant population of 527,030, which represented just over 16% of the total population (Statistics

Canada, 2009). The arrival of immigrants to Alberta has been significantly concentrated within the past decade, with approximately one fifth of the total immigrant population settling between 2001 and 2006 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2009). The top four most common countries of birth for immigrants from the 2006 census were: the United Kingdom, China, India, and the Philippines (Statistics Canada, 2009). In addition, Aboriginal peoples comprise approximately 6% of the provincial population (Statistics Canada, 2009). A report from the Alberta Treasury Board and Finance (2012) predicts the Albertan population to increase by 2 million people by 2041. The majority of this growth (65%) is projected to come from migration, with most of the people migrating from other parts of the world (Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, 2012). Thus Alberta's population has seen a significant shift in who comprises the population within the past decade, and will only continue to diversify with individuals and families migrating from many parts of the world.

With the changing population demographics, the Alberta school system has had to adapt to new groups of learners entering the system (Gerin-Lajoie, 2012). Some schools, primarily those in large urban settings, have taken a more pro-active approach, adopting specific programming and initiatives such as English Second Language programs and newcomer classes, working to ensure the school successfully integrates all students and families the school serves (Gerin-Lajoie, 2012). However, other schools have not responded to the needs of their students and families, leaving many students to fall behind and be underserved by the education system.

Two Alberta-based organizations, the Centre for Race and Culture (formally the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations [NAARR]) and the Coalition for Equal Access to Education, have conducted research into equitable education in Alberta schools. Both organizations have found that the Alberta education system significantly disadvantages English language learners [ELL], as well as racialized and Aboriginal learners and their families, from equitable participation in the education system (NAARR, 2004; Ngo, 2012). Findings from the Centre for Race and Culture research highlight various instances of interpersonal racism between students, between staff and parents, and between staff and racialized staff (NAARR, 2004). The Centre for Race and Culture report also documents numerous areas of systemic racism within the education system such as: low numbers of racialized teaching and administrative staff, Eurocentric

curricula, labelling of students and inadequate supports for ELL and Aboriginal students (NAARR, 2004). Although both organizations recognize the good work that many schools are doing to support their racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students, they both strongly advocate for the need for systemic change in order to reduce inequities and create an education system that allows all students to be successful and reach their potential (NAARR, 2004; Ngo, 2012).

Alberta has always taken pride in its education system, and has often been seen as an innovator and leader within education from across Canada. In the early 2000s Alberta's Ministry of Education put a lot of resources, research, and community consultation efforts in to exploring high school completion/non-completion barriers and facilitators within the province. Following the publication of a number of research reports based on literature searches as well as community consultations, an Alberta High School Completion Strategic Framework was developed in 2009 (Government of Alberta, 2012). The Strategic Framework acknowledged that, "high school completion is a fundamental building block on which other education and life goals are built, so when students do not complete high school, the toll on the quality of their individual lives is significant" (Government of Alberta, 2012 p. 1).

Within the Strategic Framework five key action areas were identified, Student Engagement, Successful Transitions, Collaborative Partnerships, Positive Connections, and Tracking Progress. As part of the action area, Tracking Progress, the province now collects yearly statistics on high school completion rates for students. The provincial government determines the high school completion rate by following a cohort of grade ten students and assessing the completion rate after three years, and then again after five years (Government of Alberta, 2012).

The most recent statistics from the 2011/2012 school year show the high school completion rate for the province overall was 74.8%.[2] In their reporting, the government segregates out the data for two groups of students – Aboriginal (self-identified First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit) students and ELL. As can be seen in the graphs below, the

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[2] High school completion is defined by the receiving of a high school diploma, high school equivalency diploma, certificate of achievement, post-secondary attendance without completion of a diploma, apprenticeship, or academic standing.

high school completion rates for Aboriginal students for the same school year was noticeably lower at 43.9%, and the high school completion rate for ELL (many of whom are racialized students) was also pointedly lower at 59.6% (Government of Alberta, 2012).

Comparison of general population/FNMI three-year high school completion rates
2007/2008 - 2011/2012
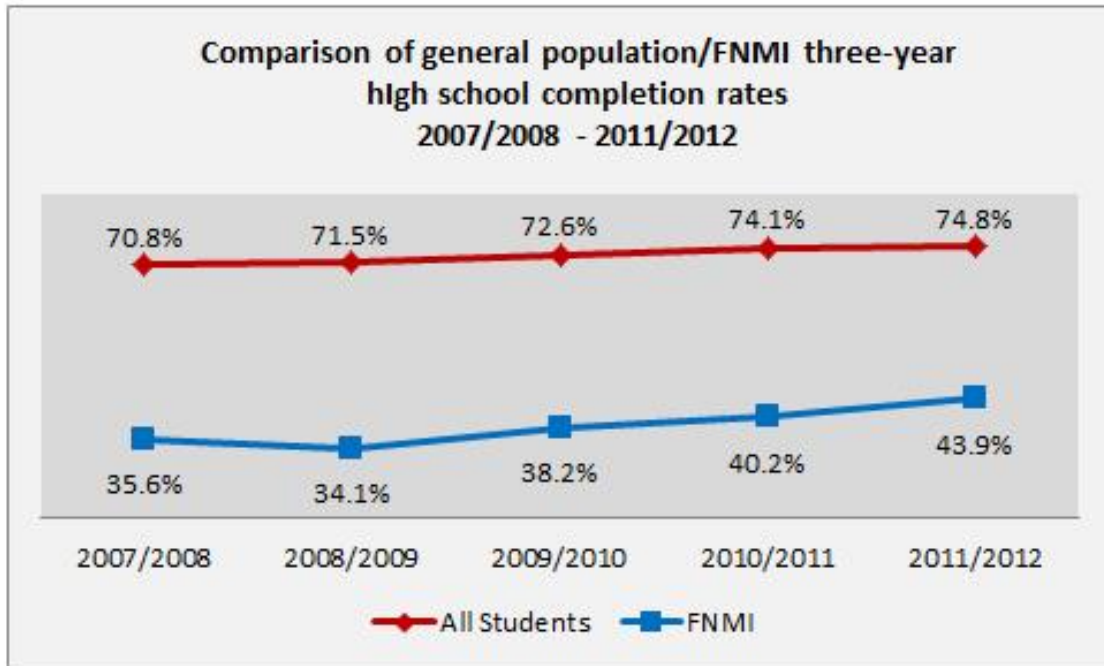
Figure 1. **Comparison of General Population/FNMI Three-year High School Completion Rates for Alberta**

The source of the material is

http://ideas.education.alberta.ca/hsc/progress/whatthenumberstellus. The use of these materials by author is done without any affiliation with or endorsement by the Government of Alberta. Reliance upon author's use of these materials is at the risk of the end user.

Comparison of general population/ELL students three-year high school completion rates 2007/2008 - 2011/2012

- 70.8% — 2007/2008 (All Students)
- 71.5% — 2008/2009 (All Students)
- 72.6% — 2009/2010 (All Students)
- 74.1% — 2010/2011 (All Students)
- 74.8% — 2011/2012 (All Students)
- 56.2% — 2007/2008 (ELL)
- 59.0% — 2008/2009 (ELL)
- 60.4% — 2009/2010 (ELL)
- 61.2% — 2010/2011 (ELL)
- 59.6% — 2011/2012 (ELL)

All Students ◆   ELL ■
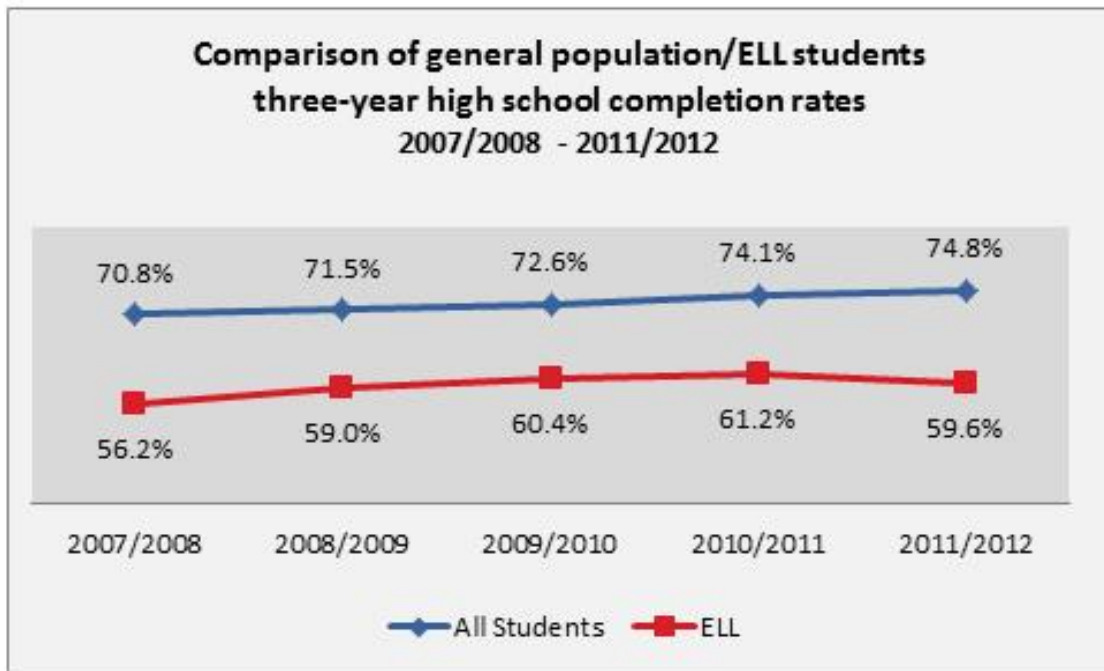
Figure 2.   *Comparison of General Population/ELL Three-year High School Completion Rates for Alberta*

The source of the material is
http://ideas.education.alberta.ca/hsc/progress/whatthenumberstellus. The use of these materials by author is done without any affiliation with or endorsement by the Government of Alberta. Reliance upon author's use of these materials is at the risk of the end user.

As the data above demonstrate, there are noticeable differences in high school completion rates for Aboriginal students and ELL in comparison to the overall total student population in Alberta. The myth has long been deconstructed in the academic literature that these observed differences are due to innate differences in intellectual ability of the students themselves (St Leger, 2001). Therefore, the education system, the policies and practices in place within the schools themselves and also at the district, board, and government levels, are failing to support ELL and Aboriginal students within Alberta, and within Canada as a whole.

Although Alberta Education has taken a number of pro-active steps by conducting research into high non-completion, creating a strategic framework with specific areas of focus that includes tracking student progress and school completion rates, nowhere does the strategic framework mention the need to examine institutional

racism that prevents Aboriginal and ELL students from completing high school at the same rates as the overall population. Despite knowledge on the existence of racism within the education system and the negative effects of racism on students and staff within schools (from Alberta-based research such as reports from the Centre for Race and Culture and Coalition for Equal Access to Education) research has shown that it is more often than not left unaddressed, unchallenged, and thus perpetuated year after year (NAARR, 2004; McCaskell, 2010; Ngo, 2012). In a research report by the Centre for Race and Culture (2004), the authors highlight that racism is sometimes intentionally left unaddressed by school administrators who refuse to even acknowledge racism as an issue. The exclusion of institutional racism from the Alberta Education Strategic Framework is a clear indictor of refusing to acknowledge racism within the educational system. The Centre for Race and Culture report also found that racism is also ignored because schools are under-resourced, undertrained, and ill-equipped with the knowledge and experience of what to do (NAARR, 2004; Ryan, 2010).

Pauchulo's (2013), research of best practices of anti-racism education in Canada, found that tackling racism within the school systems is possible and is being practiced by many schools; however she argues that challenging racism requires multi-level, integrated and well-resourced strategies to even begin to make social change. As many scholars would agree, Pauchulo (2013) states, "committing ourselves to…create schools where everyone has equal opportunity to contribute and to succeed must be grounded in the recognition that racism exists in Canadian schools" (p.13). The recognition of racism in our schools is the necessary first step.

To this point, the literature review has documented the association between race-based discrimination, racism and poor health and educational outcomes. On the flip side, there is evidence to suggest that conditions that foster diversity and positive intercultural contact can contribute to positive health outcomes or buffer against some of the associated negative health outcomes (VicHealth, 2007). Multiple strategies in various setting areas are currently being explored to mitigate race-based discrimination and promote positive intercultural contact. One setting that has been common for anti-racism and anti-discrimination initiatives is the education system. The next section will identify a number of key elements within schools that make them a preferable setting for doing anti-racism work.

2.3.1.   Education Institutions as Settings for Anti-racism Work

There has been increasing data supporting schools as a key setting to conduct anti-racism work, and increasing recognition that school-based anti-racism efforts have the potential to reduce race-based discrimination and promote intercultural understanding (Mansoui et al., 2009; Pauchulo, 2013). Schools have been suggested as key settings due to a number of factors, some of which are listed below:

- Most people have contact with the educational institution at some point in their life
- Children and youth spend a large majority of their time within the school setting
- The developmental stages that children and youth go through allow for the opportunity to influence and modify racial attitude and behaviours
- Schools play a key role in shaping social norms
- Reducing race-based discrimination and racism within school settings can have positive impacts on other schooling aspects such as school attendance and completion
- School-based strategies can target on a population level versus just the individual level (Greco, Paradies, & Priest, 2011; VicHealth, 2009).

These factors demonstrate that schools have powerful influences on shaping the norms, attitudes, and behaviours of not just students, but also families and other groups that are in contact with schools (Greco et al., 2011). Ensuring schools are supportive of all students and families and are free from discrimination is therefore an utmost priority in promoting positive educational outcomes, and positive learning environments. Creating safe and supportive schools for all students is particularly important in Canada given the multicultural demographics of the country and the projected increase in number of immigrants expected to continue to migrate and settle in Canada.

A common argument in the anti-racism education literature is that only racially diverse schools need anti-racism education, and that 'homogenous-looking' schools do not have to deal with issues pertaining to race. Administrators have long used this stance to avoid discussions of racism and anti-racism actions (McCaskell, 2010). This argument also points to the common misunderstanding of racism as only interpersonal actions between racialized and non-racialized individuals and not as a systemic issue rooted in systems of power. Greco et al. (2010), critique this argument by saying, "Anti-

racism efforts are required within schools to promote positive learning environments free from race-based discrimination for current students, but also as a means of facilitating future citizens who embrace racial difference and a society that values cultural diversity and inclusion" (p.9). On the basis that we now live within a multicultural society, regardless of the racial/cultural/ethnic makeup of the student population, it is imperative that anti-racism efforts be implemented within all schools (Greco et al., 2010). The idea that anti-racism efforts work to not only address racial inequities but support the creation of a more inclusive society all points to anti-racism education as also being a population-level preventative health intervention.

2.4. Approaches to Addressing Racism in Education Institutions

Practices and approaches for managing and promoting diversity and inclusion have increased with organizations and institutions, such as workplaces and schools, becoming more racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse (Trenerry & Paradies, 2012). Some of these diversity initiatives have been driven from higher-level policy changes (such as school board policies) that trickle down into individual institutions (e.g. schools), whereas others come from grassroots work within the institutions or from people who interact with these institutions. Schools that have been successful in creating inclusive environments for all students and staff see the benefits in greater student safety, student achievement, and student participation (Greco et al., 2010).

Within the educational setting there are a number of different areas in which anti-racism approaches and strategies can be developed and implemented including: school policies and guidelines, curriculum and pedagogy, training and development, student support and development, parent and community involvement, and monitoring and reporting of student performance and incidents of race-based discrimination (Greco, et al. 2010; Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers, 2000). There are several approaches that can be taken within each of, or across the identified areas above. Due to the large number of strategies possible described in the literature for addressing race-based discrimination, I have focused on the most commonly discussed strategies within the education literature – diversity training, school policy, and

monitoring and reporting. I conclude by examining a final strategy, organizational assessments, which have been identified as an underutilized approach and flagged specifically as having potential benefits above other strategies in identifying systemic factors of racism in institutions.

2.4.1.   Staff Diversity or Cultural Competency Training

Diversity and cultural competency training are a common technique used within the education field. Diversity and cultural competency training can incorporate a large array of content and delivery styles. In a broad sense diversity training refers to "programs that specifically aim to increase positive (or decrease negative) inter-group attitudes, prejudices and behaviours among participants" (Pendry, Driscoll & Field, 2007, p. 59). Trenerry at al. (2010) adds to the definition, stating

> Diversity-training approaches can be broadly grouped as intending to improve knowledge (e.g. of minority groups, participants' own biases) by providing accurate information; alter participants' attitudes by challenging conscious and unconscious stereotypes and prejudices; or change behaviours by attempting to equip participants with skills to bring about behavioural change. (p. 38)

A number of critiques have been made towards diversity training, in particular because it is often the most common and go-to response. Diversity training provides organizations with an easy way to demonstrate action is being taken; however as Henry et al. (2000) argue "it does little to change the ideology that creates the framework within which the organization operates" (p.363). Thus, diversity training may result in increases in awareness and minor behaviour change, but it does little to upset the overall operations of an organization and the underlying oppressive values and ideologies that persist. Overall, the main critique of diversity and cultural competency training is its predominant focus on individual knowledge, attitude, and behaviour change as opposed to wider structural change (Kalev, Dobbin & Kelly, 2006; Pederson, Walker, & Wise, 2005).

2.4.2.   School Policy

Revising and writing school policies to promote educational equity and ensuring policies do not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, or culture is another common anti-racism education strategy. Policies can be proactive and reactive, in that they can either promote an inclusive schooling environment to all students and focus on systemic changes in school practice that allow equitable school participation and achievement, or they can be more reactive in nature where they outline disciplinary measures for incidents of racism and discrimination. The benefit of policy reform as a strategy is it can address systemic-level racism and have a wider reach on the entire school community rather than only a few individuals (Greco et al., 2010).

On the reverse side, one critique of policy reform is that instituting a policy does not necessarily lead to the implementation of that policy within practice. One struggle some anti-racism educators talk about is moving a policy into action (C. Hay, personal communication, June 23, 2013). A school board or school may reach the point of having an anti-racism or equity policy, yet the policy may fall short on actually being implemented fully within the board or school.

2.4.3.   Monitoring and Reporting

A final anti-racism education strategy that is discussed in the literature is monitoring and reporting. Monitoring and reporting refers to the collection of systematic data on staff and students and reporting this back to relevant stakeholders (school boards, staff, parents, the wider school community). In order to improve educational inequities, schools must know where they are starting at and how they compare each subsequent year. Therefore schools should be collecting regular statistics on staff and student demographics, number of racist incidents, numbers of student achievement and student distribution between academic and non-academic streams segregated by minority groups (Pauchulo, 2013). The Alberta government currently collects high school completion rate data on a provincial level and segregates the data in their reporting between all students, Aboriginal students, and ELL students (Government of Alberta, 2012).

On a final note, many anti-racism education scholars recognize that there are a number of key principles required for successful anti-racism work. A review conducted by Greco, Priest, and Paradies (2010) on strategies and resources to address racism and support diversity in schools provides a comprehensive overview of international literature on this topic. Their review provides a list of guiding principles informed by "school-based, anti-racism strategies, as well as more general anti-racism literature" (p. 12) that are recommended for all school-based, anti-racism strategies to include. Their list of principles for anti-racism strategies are as follows: multi-level, multi-strategy, integrated and long-term, based on psychological, sociological and/or educational theory, matched to the social-cognitive skills of participants, appropriate for the ethnoracial composition of the school, and include adequate teacher training. A review by Pauchulo (2013) of best practices and current initiatives in anti-racism education in Canada also provided a list of principles that anti-racism education initiatives should have – begin with baseline and needs assessment research, be embedded in a district policy, be district led, include materials to support policy, be a whole school initiative, address gaps in the curriculum, and build on current efforts. Greco et al. (2010) and Pauchulo's (2013) principles for anti-racism education initiatives remind us that no one approach alone is sufficient to address racism, and that anti-racism efforts require sufficient leadership, resources, time, and theoretical backing.

2.5. Addressing Systemic Racism with Organizational Assessment Tools

Mentioned above there are a number of different approaches or strategies that can be used in anti-racism education. Organizational assessment tools are one other strategy for addressing race-based discrimination in educational institutions. Also known in the literature as cultural competency organizational assessments or diversity audits, organizational assessment tools offer the benefit of being able to examine multiple aspects of an organization, and "[allow]s organizations to review and plan for improved practice across a range of organizational functions" (Trenerry & Paradies, 2012, p.12). Organizational assessments typically follow a process wherein they allow the organization to identify where they are currently in terms of policy and practice, what documents exist to support this, where they would like to be as an organization, and how

they will move forward (Trenerry & Paradies, 2012). Skrla et al. (2004) propose that audits can be specifically beneficial for addressing inequities because although staff/employers/employees may be aware of inequities, they often lack a systematic way of examining the structures, policies, and practices that contribute to producing inequities. Therefore the strength of organizational assessments above the other strategies is organizational assessments will typically examine all of these components within an institution, providing a broad overview of how processes are working/not working together to address racism, and then devise actionable plans to address and eliminate the inequities (Skrla et al., 2004).

Trenerry and Paradies (2012) reviewed organizational assessment tools for managing diversity and addressing racism in the workplace, and found organizational assessment are an underutilized anti-racism strategy. Trenerry and Paradies (2012) hypothesize that the greater time commitment and personnel engagement required of organizational audits are a key barrier to their use. However, Trenerry and Paradies (2012) argue that the up-front time put into completing an audit can result in longer-term solutions and address some of the root causes of discrimination and inequity.

Auditing diversity practices helps avoid 'quick-fix' solutions and enables meaningful change by gathering accurate data about organization strengths and weaknesses and convincing managers that problems exits. (p.12)

In addition to uncovering strengths and weaknesses in policies and practices, Trenerry and Paradies (2012) also argue that audit tools provide a concrete way of establishing organizational accountability by "providing a framework for planning and the allocation of resources" (p.12).

The underutilization of organizational assessment tools in education settings is also evident in the limited discussion of audit tools within the education literature, specifically with respect to assessing racism and/or cultural diversity. A review of two prominent education databases, Education Source and ERIC, as well as Academic Search Premier, using the search terms, "audit tool" "diversity audit tool" "anti-racism audit tool" "organizational assessment tool" and "diversity + organizational assessment tool" identified very few articles on audit or organizational assessment tools in relation to

cultural diversity/anti-racism. The majority of articles located on audit or organizational assessment tools discussed financial audits, and thus were excluded. Since so few tools were identified as specific towards cultural diversity/anti-racism education, articles discussing equity audits that included an examination of race/culture/ethnicity were also included. All papers that did not discuss audits concerned with evaluating cultural diversity, racism, or equity were excluded. Eight articles met the inclusion criteria of discussing audit or organizational assessments tools relating to cultural diversity/anti-racism/equity within a school setting (Brown, 2010; Cleveland, Powell, Saddler & Tyler, 2011; Groenke, 2010; Morrison, 2007; Ramburuth & Welch, 2005; Sailes, Cleveland & Tyler, 2014; Skrla et al., 2004; Embry, 1997).

Of the eight articles identified, only one contained an actual audit/organizational assessment tool (Groenke, 2010), while the rest either discussed a large audit process with no specific tools (Powell et al., 2011; Sailes et al., 2014) or the use of audit tools more generally in education. All of the articles identified supported the use of audit tools as a strategy for identifying educational inequities. The majority of the articles talked about equity audits, yet Skrla et al. (2004) highlighted the need for more focus on the category of race specifically in audits. A greater focus on racism is suggested because of the typical avoidance of discussions of racism as a factor in inequitable educational outcomes. Moreover, the articles supported the use of audit tools as a practical, easy-to-apply strategy that help address a complex issue (educational inequities) and also help staff to locate the responsibility for persistent educational inequities within school policies, practices, and procedures rather than within individual students and their families (Brown, 2010; Cleveland, et al., 2011; Morrison, 2007; Sailes et al., 2014; Embry, 1997). This shift in location of responsibility is probably one of the most important elements in being able to address systemic inequities. Furthermore, the literature supports the use of audits tools as a strategy because audit tools are often designed to promote action planning upon their completion, a crucial step that can be easily lost in other data collection activities.

As stated, the literature search only identified one actual audit tool (Groenke, 2010). Groenke's (2010) equity audit tool was designed for student teachers to complete as part of a course on action research. The equity tool consisted of a series of questions split into different categories, such as, gender data, sexual orientation and identity data,

(dis)ability data, race and ethnicity data, general achievement, etc., that required the student teacher to simply collect numerical data on the number of students identifying in each category (Groenke, 2010). Although Groenke's (2010) tool is useful for student teachers to begin to think about inequities in schools, it is not designed for use by a school for systemic change to address racism specifically.

The provincial Alberta Education website was searched to examine if audit tools/organizational assessment tools were discussed. An initial search using the terms, "audit" and "assessment tool" found results relating mostly to financial audits and grade level assessment tools for teachers. One assessment tool for identifying district policy preparedness for digital citizenship was found in the search (it was used to audit a policy about digital technology use in schools). The search was then narrowed using terms "cultural assessment tool" "diversity assessment tool" "organisational assessment tool" and "school diversity audits." One assessment tool was found titled, *Supporting a Safe and Caring School* (Alberta Education, n.d.). This tool focused generally on students' perceptions of safety in the school environment, but did ask two questions about being friendly towards others from different cultures, and feeling excluded due to one's race, gender, age, sexual orientation, appearance or ability. The search also identified one research paper by the Coalition of Equal Access to Education (2009) that examined English second language students and families' perceptions of Alberta schools' responses to diversity. The first recommendation that came out of the report was: "[The Coalition of Equal Access to Education] recommends that school districts in the province conduct ***system-wide cultural audits*** with due attention to policies, guidelines, business plans, curriculum, funding allocation, accountability and professional requirements for staff" (p. 31). Here the Coalition is providing a direct recommendation for the use of cultural audits within the Alberta school districts. The research report was presumably presented to Alberta Education, although the recipient audience was not specifically stated in the report. It is unclear as well if there have been any follow-up actions from this report.

As evidenced by the lack of audit and organizational assessment tools identified, more work is needed within this area, specifically when the current evidence is supporting the use of audit tools as successful strategies for addressing inequities in educational outcomes. As Skrla et al. (2004) articulate, audit tools can especially play a

key role in anti-racism work by providing a mechanism which requires staff and administrators to discuss issues of racism and locate its position within education systems and as a contributor to educational inequities.

Despite some growing support for the use of organizational assessments and audit tools in education, Shore and Wright (1999) critique the use of audits by drawing attention to the implied hierarchical and paternalistic nature of auditing processes. The term *audit* carries with it associations to other terms like "discipline", "accountability", "effectiveness", "good-practice", "bench marks", "standards", and "external verification" which imply a correct way of doing things based on external judgements (Shore & Wright). Shore and Wright (1999) also argue the outcome of audits are often met with punitive measures that do little to improve conditions. Although all valid critiques and concerns with auditing, there are ways of conducting audits that enable a participatory process which allow individuals within institutions to monitor and enhance their own performance and quality. Ensuring traditionally marginalized voices are heard during the audit process, knowing who the results of the audit are accountable to, and not imposing outside solutions are all suggested ways to reduce potentially hierarchal and paternalistic ways of conducting audits (Shore and Wright, 1999).

Overall, organizational assessment tools demonstrate the potential to be an effective approach to addressing racism in educational institutions. The other more common strategies discussed in the previous section, such as diversity training, often lack a systemic analysis of the problem, which results in short term changes and shifts in attitudes and behaviours but not long-term sustainable systemic change (Trenerry & Paradies, 2012). Organizational assessments provide a mapping of the organizational structure that allows one to understand the components that make up the processes. This helps determine how interventions can be implemented and targeted to different components that will help direct towards desired outcomes. Thus organizational assessments lend themselves well to being able to address systemic levels of racism within educational institutions and therefore are a promising approach to use in anti-racism education practice.

2.5.1. School-based Audit Tool for Assessing Policies, Practices, and Procedures for Supporting Cultural Diversity and Addressing Race-based Discrimination

The school-based audit tool used for this project was developed in Australia by researchers, Greco, Paradies, and Priest (2011)[3]. The audit tool was developed out of a review of 10 other Australian school-based audit tools, focused on the topic area of race-based discrimination and cultural diversity. Greco et al. (2011) initially sought to design a user-friendly and comprehensive tool that would "provide an in-depth assessment and understanding of school practices, policies and procedures" (Greco et al., 2011; p. 2-3). Elements of the 10 reviewed tools were incorporated into creating a 'best-practice' audit tool around supporting cultural diversity and addressing race-based discrimination (Greco et al., 2011).

The original 36-page audit tool consists of an introduction, a glossary of terms, and four sections, each with a separate focus. Section 1 of the tool provides a broad overview assessing current school practice and procedures relating to supporting cultural diversity and addressing race-based discrimination. Section 2 assesses school policies relating to culturally diverse learners and anti-racism or equity school policies. Section 3 assesses school practices in regards to monitoring and reporting incidents of race-based discrimination. Section 3 also includes a small segment on monitoring and reporting academic student achievement. Finally, Section 4 assesses school practices on supporting the needs of diverse students, and engagement between the school and parents, and the school and external agencies (Greco et al., 2011).

In the directions for its use, Greco et al. (2011) state that ideally a school committed to conducting the audit would complete all four sections; however if schools could only partially complete the audit tool it was suggested that schools complete Section 1 in order to provide a general overview of the school's policies and practices in

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[3] Permission to use and adapt the audit tool was obtained from Paradies and Priest prior to starting the research.

supporting diversity and addressing race-based discrimination. Section 1 of the tool was intentionally designed to provide a broad overview of all the topics, with Section 2, 3, and 4, going more in-depth on specific areas such as policy, monitoring and reporting that were mentioned in Section 1.

The similar social contexts in Australia and Canada make the use of an Australian-based tool applicable to the Canadian context. Both Australia and Canada are White settler colonies with an Indigenous population. Both countries have also experienced years of immigration resulting in both countries having highly multicultural populations today (Sandercock & Brock, 2009). White 'Canadian' and White 'Australian' national policies were the foundation of both countries national identities for centuries prior to both countries later adopting multiculturalism policies in the 1970s (Mann, 2012). Many of the early national policies were racist against non-White, non-British immigrants, and/or promoted assimilation of newcomers' cultures and identities.

With both Canada and Australia being former British colonies, their education systems are rooted in the British model of education, centred on a Eurocentric philosophy and system of teaching. Thus, both systems are built off racist policies and practices that routinely disadvantage racialized and Aboriginal students.

2.6. Summary

As the previous sections have demonstrated, racism is a systematic problem that exists in Canadian schools today, and which negative consequences for both educational and health outcomes. The literature shows that racism has serious and real health consequences for individuals and communities, specifically for racialized peoples. Racism has been linked to a number of poor mental and physical health outcomes, engagement in high-risk health behaviours, and limiting access to services and supports that promote or support health (e.g. housing, education).

It has been well documented by scholars that the Canadian education system is a site for institutional racism. As schools have become more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse, staff and administrators have been pushed to manage the diversity of learners and their families they now serve. The latest Alberta high school completion

statistics from the Government of Alberta (2012) indicate that the education system is still failing Aboriginal and ELL students within the province compared to the overall population. A lot of work has been done by the province to create a framework to direct actions and to remedy the lower high school completion rates of Aboriginal and ELL students, yet the role of racism in precluding equal success of these students has remained absent . Racism in schools therefore remains seen as either acts between individuals or not an issue at all, leaving it more often than not unchallenged.

Some schools and school districts are taking pro-active steps to address racism, and this review briefly summarized some common anti-racism strategies in education practice – diversity training, policy, and monitoring and reporting. A fourth, lesser-used strategy in education, organizational assessment tools, was explored for its potential benefit as an effective anti-racism strategy, particularly for addressing systemic racism. Of the limited literature on cultural diversity/anti-racism/equity school-based audits found, all supported the use of audit tools as practical strategies for helping school staff locate educational inequities within school policies and practices. The lack of literature on specific cultural diversity/anti-racism tools points to the need for more work in this area.

3. Methodology

This multiple case study research project used a mixed methods approach, informed by an anti-racism education lens to pilot and assess a school-based audit tool examining school policies, procedures, and practices that support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination. The study involved a staff questionnaire and pre-audit focus group to add contextual information about each school setting, and post-audit focus groups to gain in-depth information about the school staff's experience and knowledge about supporting diversity and addressing race-based discrimination and utilizing the audit tool.

3.1. Multiple Case Study

This project used a multiple case study methodology, collecting data from two racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse junior high schools, located within a large metropolis in Alberta. Data collection occurred over a three-month period. Yin (2009) defines a case study as an investigation of "a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context" (p.18). Case study methodologies have typically been used to better understand processes and behaviours, especially in novel areas in which little is known, within the natural setting of the intervention, event or phenomena (Meyer, 2001; Hartley, 1994). Leonard-Barton (1990) suggests that case studies are particularly useful in answering 'how' and 'why' questions because they are concerned with examining processes and behaviours. My project was specifically interested in answering a number of 'how' questions about the audit tool and audit process, and thus fit well with a case study methodology.

This case study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods; however qualitative methods were the predominant method of data collection. Qualitative research aims to contextualize individuals' experiences by studying research subjects in

their natural settings, and understanding the meanings that people prescribe to their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative methods therefore pair nicely with case study methodologies to gain in-depth understanding of experiences and processes occurring within naturalistic settings. Using qualitative research methods permitted me to gain a more in-depth understanding of issues around cultural diversity and race-based discrimination than quantitative methods alone would have. The qualitative methods used within this project captured significant elements of context, such as staff interactions and dynamics that are critical for collaborative anti-racism work.

Meyer (2001) highlights that one main difference between case study and other qualitative designs like ethnography and grounded theory is that case studies allow for the use of theory or conceptual categories to help guide the research and data analysis. Using a case study methodology was seen as more appropriate than other methodologies such as grounded theory because the purpose of my research was to understand the process of piloting a new tool from an anti-racism education lens. By utilizing a case study methodology I was able to therefore apply principles of anti-racism education in the analysis of my data and interpretation of my results.

3.2. Anti-racism Education Lens

As stated previously, this research is informed by an anti-racism education lens. I draw particularly from Dei's (2000) work in anti-racism education, while acknowledging the work of other anti-racism scholars (Schick, 2010; Tato & Henry, 2006). Dei (2000) defines anti-racism education as:

> An action-oriented educational strategy for institutional, systemic change to address racism and interlocking systems of social oppression. It is a critical discourse of race and racism in society that challenges the continuance of racializing social groups for differential and unequal treatment. Anti-racism explicitly names the issue of race and social difference as issues of power and equity, rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety. (p. 27)

Anti-racism education, as a critical discourse with an action-oriented approach towards systemic change, helped to shape my interpretation of the use of the school-

based audit tool. By taking this lens, I saw the audit tool as a mechanism to initiate discussion and help position racism at an institutional rather than interpersonal level within schools. As Dei (2000) states, anti-racism education is a strategy for "institutional, systemic change to address racism and interlocking systems of oppression" (p.27). In taking an anti-racism lens, the education system is explicitly identified as the location for change rather than individual actors (teachers, students, parents/guardians) alone, and it also pinpoints the education system as having a role in producing and maintaining racial inequities in society.

Dei (1996) identifies ten principles of anti-racism education, specific to the pursuit of anti-racism education within the Canadian context. Dei's (1996) ten principles of anti-racism education are, (in no hierarchical order):

1. Anti-racism education recognizes social implications of the concept of 'race.'

2. One cannot understand fully the social effects of race without understanding the intersections of all forms of social oppression.

3. Questions the White (male) power, privilege and rationality for dominance in society.

4. Acknowledges the traditional role of the education system in producing and re-producing (race, gender, sexual, and class-based) inequalities in society.

5. Problematizes the marginalization of certain voices and forms of knowledge in society, and specifically within the education system.

6. Education needs to provide an appreciation to the human lived experience.

7. Involves an examination and critique of the notion of 'identity.'

8. Confronts the challenge of diversity and difference in Canadian society and recognizes the need for a more inclusive education system which identifies schools as "working communities."

9. The school problems of youth must be understood within the greater context of their lives.

10. Critiques the explanation of the 'family' or 'home environment' as the source of the problem experiences by youth in relation to schooling.

A common critique of anti-racism is its primary focus on race above other axes of oppression. Dei and Calliste (2000) state, however, "the politics of anti-racism demands that race be central" (p. 15). Dei (1996) is clear in his writing that anti-racism education acknowledges the interlocking systems of social oppression; yet it places the primary analysis through a race lens. Dei and Calliste (2000) argue the need to specifically create a space for a discussion of race is because, "dominant discourses erase or deny race and yet accentuate class and perhaps gender in part because of the discomfort of speaking about race and racism" (p. 16). This echoes Skrla et al. (2006) comments in the need for equity audit tools to pay specific attention to areas of racism. The erase of race over and over, especially in the fields of education and public health, in the face of persistent racial inequities requires that race be made central in some discussions.

In summary, the focus of anti-racism education on institutional-level change allows for conversations to move beyond a focus on the individual and individual acts of discrimination, which traditionally dominates discussions of race-based discrimination within schools, towards conversations about institutional-level racism. This shift is in line the purpose of the audit tool, which aims to have staff recognize systemic levels of facilitators and barriers for supporting culturally-diverse students and addressing race-based discrimination. Perhaps what is most appealing in anti-racism education is its action-oriented focus. Without action, structures that maintain the current social order remain in place and inequitable education outcomes will continue to be seen across students.

3.3. The School-based Audit Tool

As stated in the literature review, the school-based audit tool used in this project was developed in Australia by researchers Greco, Paradies, and Priest (2011). I was a student intern under the supervision of Paradies during the time the tool was being developed and finalized.

The original instructions for conducting the audit are as follows,

> The following audit tool is divided up into Sections (Sections 1-4). It is advised that all schools **complete at least Section 1 of the audit tool,** in order to provide a general picture of school practice in regards to supporting diversity and addressing race-based discrimination. If schools have policies relating to race-based discrimination and cultural diversity, it is ideal that all Sections (1-4) of the audit be completed. If schools do not have policies relating to race-based discrimination and cultural diversity, ideally, Sections 1, 3, & 4 of the audit tool would be completed. (Greco et al., 2011, p. 4)

I approached my project with the intention of working through all four sections of the tool with each school, acknowledging that it might not be possible to complete all four sections due to time and resistance towards the tool. I presented the tool to both working groups as the instructions stated, encouraging at a minimum for each working group to complete Section 1. Both schools completed Section 1, and one school completed part of Section 4. Unfortunately neither school completed Section 2, 3 or 4 of the tool. Therefore there are no data on either schools assessment of their school policies, school practices in terms of monitoring, reporting and addressing incidents of race-based discrimination, and on supporting the diverse needs of ethnically diverse students. Each of these missed components is important for fully understanding the school context and different areas that may be contributing to inequities. It is thus important that future use of the tool allocate more time in order to complete all sections, or the tool be shortened so that all of these areas can be captured.

3.3.1. Revisions to Audit Tool

Since the audit tool was developed for the Australian context, some revisions were necessary to adapt it to fit the Canadian educational context[4]. My first step to revising the tool was reading through the tool in its entirety to identify areas and language specific to the Australian context. The most noticeable changes that needed to be made were in regards to the information pertaining to Aboriginal peoples. The language used to identify and discuss the Indigenous populations in each country is

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[4] Revisions to the audit tool was completed by myself with guidance from my supervisors.

different, thus I revised the tool to reflect the language more commonly used in Canada in regards to Aboriginal peoples (e.g. substituting the terms First Nations, Métis, and Inuit for Australian Aboriginals). Secondly, questions were adapted that made reference to specifically Australian Indigenous practices (such as the 'welcome to country' practice) or policies (e.g. Equal Opportunities Act, Racial and Religious Tolerance Act).

The original audit tool contained 128 questions divided into the four sections. After reading through the entire audit tool, some questions seemed redundant. These questions were removed. The tool also seemed too long to maintain the engagement of the participants so I removed some questions that did not seem as important to addressing institutional racism in junior high schools such as, "Are there paper, paints and crayons available in a variety of skin tones?"

During the revision process, I also reviewed other cultural diversity/anti-discrimination audit tools for further ideas and as points of comparisons. I focused my review on the ten tools that were used in the creation of the school-based audit tool (Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers, 2000; Dadzie, 2001; Dare to Lead, n.d.; Department of Education and Children's Services, 2007; Department of Education and Training, The Office of Multicultural Interest and the Public Education Endowment Trust, 2009; Mansouri, Jenkins, et al., 2009; New South Wales Department of School Education, 1995; The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, 2004; Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2006; Victorian Government Department of Human Services, 2007). I also reviewed one workplace assessment tool (Trenerry & Paradies, 2012) that was created simultaneously at the research centre in Australia as the school-based audit tool, and an equity and diversity tool for Canadian medical schools (Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, 2011).

One element of the workplace assessment tool that I really liked was each question asked the priority level of each item on a Likert scale of one to five, one being a low priority and five being a high priority. I took that idea and adapted it slightly to include a *Priorities for Action* page at the end of each section (see pages 16, 20, 25, and 31 of revised audit tool). I felt it was necessary to have a *Priorities for Action* section to help the working group whom would be completing the tool narrow their focus for moving forwards to action.

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The final major revision I made to the tool was creating an additional column to the table. The original tool consisted of four columns – the question, a 'yes' column, a 'no' column, and a final column asking for an explanation of the answer selected. Upon review of the other tools identified in the previous paragraph, I decided to split the final column into two separate columns, one asking for indicators to support the 'yes' or 'no' answer (e.g. documents, policies, programs), and the other asking for further explanations and recommendations for future action. Trenerry and Paradies (2011) used a similar 'indicator' and 'recommendations' layout in their workplace audit tool and I liked the 'indicators' column as an added piece to provide a bit of evidence for each answer. As well, I thought that listing indicators of support would help identify items that are supported formally either through policy, or other documents, and other items that are just informally supported.

A copy of the final tool that was piloted can be found in Appendix A.

3.3.2.   Ethical Considerations

This project was approved by the Simon Fraser University Research Ethics Board as well as the District School Board in which the two schools were located. In order to maintain anonymity of the schools as well as the staff who participated from both schools, pseudonyms have been used in the write-up of the results.

3.3.3.   Participating Schools

The audit tool was piloted with two junior high schools, given the pseudonyms Yellowhead Junior High School and Prairie Rose Junior High School (shortened to just Yellowhead and Prairie Rose for the remainder of the thesis). The two schools were located in the Public District School Board in a large metropolitan city in Alberta, Canada. The metropolitan city of Alberta was chosen based on prior relationships I had built from working and living there, as well as the city having a large percentage of immigrants and refugees settle in the area in the last two decades. During a visit in February 2013, I was introduced to two assistant principals by former co-workers who were at the time conducting youth programs within the schools. In the initial meetings, I explained my project and proposed timeline to the assistant principals. Both assistant

principals agreed to have their school to participate, and believed the project fit well within their school context given the vast racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity present in both schools.

Both junior high schools in the project serve students in grades seven, eight, and nine. School enrollment ranged between 350 to 450 students and 30 to 35 staff. The majority of students were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with White students being in the minority. Both schools also reported having a small number of self-identified Aboriginal students.

3.3.4.   *Participants*

This project worked primarily with a small staff working group from each junior high school. In my initial discussions with the assistant principals about the project I expressed that ideally the school staff would decide upon the working group (between four and eight members) to complete the audit tool and be involved in the research process. I highly encouraged the working group to be comprised of a diverse group of staff representing different teaching subject areas, and different roles and positions within the school (e.g. administration staff, support staff, and teaching staff) as well as staff who had an interest in diversity and anti-discrimination issues within the school.

In Yellowhead the assistant principal put together a working group of four teachers (who were selected based on their expressed interest to complete Masters degrees and/or in research) and himself. One teacher had to pull out of the research project before it commenced due to work conflicts and the assistant principal was only able to sit in on the pre-audit focus group. Since the assistant principal had hand-selected staff to participate in the project, I also wanted to open up an invitation to all staff in case others were interested. During a staff meeting I did a small presentation on my research project and invited any staff members who were possibly interested to either contact myself or the assistant principal. No other staff expressed interest and we continued the project with the three teaching staff and the assistant principal as the working group.

In Prairie Rose, the working group was formed after I did a presentation of my research project during a staff meeting. At the conclusion of the presentation I left a sign-up sheet for staff to write their names if they were interested in participating in the project. The assistant principal then played an instrumental role in reminding staff who had signed up, and recruiting additional staff to participate in the project. The working group at Prairie Rose varied between five and eight members, with representation from support, teaching, and administrative levels. Both the assistant principal and principal participated in the pre-audit focus group; however only the assistant principal was able to continue with the project and participate in the audit and post-audit focus group.

Prior to commencing both pre-audit focus groups, I reviewed the information letter and consent form with the working group staff (Appendix B). All participating staff signed the consent form before beginning data collection.

3.3.5.   *Data Collection*

I used multiple methods of data collection to understand the uptake and use of the school-based audit tool. As Yin (2009) suggests, it is common for case studies to rely on multiple sources of information or evidence for data collection. Focus groups, a staff-wide questionnaire, and the recorded audit session were the main methods of data collection.

It is well known in anti-racism education practice that it is paramount to have an understanding of the context in which one is working. As Brown (2010) articulates, "understanding the nature of beliefs, attitudes, and values is essential to understanding educators' choices, decisions, and effectiveness regarding issues of diversity, social justice, and equity" (p. 11). Knowledge of the context (in this case the two schools) provides a basic understanding of staff knowledge, beliefs, and behaviours, which are a crucial first step for shifting or changing these. To assess the context I utilized a staff-wide "Building off School Strengths" questionnaire to better understand the entire school staffs' perceptions and beliefs towards racism.

As well, I conducted a pre-audit focus group with both schools working groups to gain a more in-depth understanding of how the school currently supported cultural

diversity and addressed race-based discrimination. The pre-audit focus group served as a source of baseline data for comparison to the post-audit focus group. The questionnaire and pre-focus group data not only provided valuable insight into issues and initiatives within the school, it helped to situate the staff's responses to the audit tool questions in terms of their understanding and knowledge of cultural diversity, discrimination, racism, and anti-racism education.

Data collection consisted of four parts: staff-wide, "Building off School Strengths" questionnaire, working group pre-audit focus group, the working group audit session, and working group post-audit focus group. In Prairie Rose Junior High, the instruments were collected in the order listed above. Due to added support from administrative staff and staff readiness, in Yellowhead Junior High, the pre-audit focus group occurred before the staff-wide questionnaire. Although this was not ideal, it was the only feasible option due to timing and scheduling conflicts within this school setting.

School "Building off School Strengths" Staff Questionnaire

Staff in both schools were asked to complete a one-time questionnaire (see Appendix C) at the beginning of the project. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain a better understanding of staff perceptions of racism and race-based discrimination within the school. At the start of the project I delivered a 10 minute presentation during an after-school staff meeting at both schools. The presentation explained the overall project and allowed staff to ask questions about the project and their involvement. The questionnaires were distributed to all staff at the conclusion of my presentation. An information sheet at the beginning of the questionnaire explained the research, issues of confidentiality, and provided contact information for myself and the SFU Office of Research Ethics.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section one consisted of 20 Likert-scale questions, that asked participants to rate on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), a series of statements about the school environment, staff training, and staff behaviours and beliefs in regards to cultural diversity and race-based discrimination. Section two consisted of seven demographic questions, and section three was an open space for staff to write any additional comments on the broad topic of cultural diversity of race-based discrimination within the school.

Pilot Testing of Questionnaire

I pilot tested the questionnaire in March 2013 with six teaching staff in British Columbia who were part of a multicultural and race relations education course I was enrolled in at Simon Fraser University. The teachers provided feedback on the length of time it took to complete, formatting of the questionnaire, and clarity of questions. Their feedback was incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups, one pre-audit and one post-audit, were held in each school with the assembled working groups. The purpose of the pre and post- audit focus groups were to engage staff in a dialogue about cultural diversity, race-based discrimination, and the audit tool as it was piloted within their school setting. I selected a focus group method because the pilot of the audit tool was done by a team of staff, with the team working together emphasized as a key component. Because many of the questions asked required staff to reflect on practices, procedures and initiatives within the school, the focus group was preferred to individual interviews, as the focus group helped to stimulate ideas among group members. Additionally, Kitzinger (1995) states that the focus group method is "particularly useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences, and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way" (p. 299). Being able to understand *why* participants liked or did not like the audit tool was important for understanding how it could be improved and conducted in other schools.

The pros and cons of forming a focus group with strangers versus with individuals who already have interactions together have been widely discussed in the literature (Freeman, 2006; Laimputtong, 2011; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). Since my project worked with school staff, at relatively small schools, the focus groups were automatically composed of individuals who knew one another. As Laimputtong (2011) articulates, "[p]re-existing focus groups are used when the researchers aim to obtain conversations and interactions, which may appear in the normal environment where attitudes are negotiated and formed" (p. 38). Although the staff did not necessarily work closely with one another on a daily basis, there was a level of familiarity that existed among staff.

The pre and post-audit focus groups were held either after school hours, or during a lunch hour in one case, and lasted approximately an hour in length. Both the pre and post-audit focus groups followed a question guide (Appendix D) that consisted of six to seven open-ended questions. The questions in the pre-audit focus groups centered on examples of the school's current approaches for addressing cultural diversity and race-based discrimination, as well as perceptions of the barriers and weaknesses, and the perceived importance placed on addressing these issues within the school. The post-audit focus group questions asked staff to reflect on the audit tool, what they liked and did not like about it, suggested changes to improve the tool, if the process of completing the tool had initiated reflection or discussion outside of the time together, and finally how the staff thought they might use the information they gained from the pilot in the future.

Audit Tool

The final adapted 34-page audit tool consisted of an introductory section that discussed why schools are an important setting for anti-discrimination and anti-racism work, a rationale for why schools should conduct an audit, background information on the formation of the audit tool, and a description of how to complete the audit, a glossary of terms, and four sections of questions (1. Assessing Current School Practice and Procedures; 2. Assessing School Policy; 3. Assessing School Practice in terms of Monitoring, Reporting and Addressing incidents of Race-based Discrimination; and 4. Supporting the Diverse needs of Ethnically Diverse Students and Promoting Support of Diversity Among all Students).

At the conclusion of the pre-audit focus groups, the two working groups arranged a time and date for the audit. I encouraged both groups to choose a time after school, as more than one hour would be needed for the completion of the tool. One week prior to the audit dates I delivered packages to each of the working group staff containing a copy of the audit tool, a copy of the School Board's Multicultural Education Policy, and a copy of the schools vision, mission statement, and values (if available). The package also contained a cover letter outlining what was in the packages and encouraged staff to read the introduction section of the audit tool prior to the audit session.

At the start of each audit session, I took the first 10 minutes to go through the introduction section of the audit, which explained the purpose, the background development, and process of the tool as well as explain the four sections of the tool. I used this time to explain the role of the working group versus my role in the audit process. Because I wanted the working groups to take the lead on facilitating working through the tool, I encouraged each group to designate a facilitator(s). I explained that my role would be to record the groups' answers on the large master copy of the audit tool, keep time and provide clarification around questions. I gave the groups a number of options for how they could work through completing the tool – option one was to work through each question together as a group, reading and then discussing it together all at once, option two involved each member answering questions on a page or section individually first then coming together to discuss and reach consensus. I welcomed other suggestions for completing the audit tool from the staff. Both working groups decided on option one, to work through each question together as a group. At Prairie Rose since there were six staff members in the working group I also gave the option that they could split into two groups and work through separate sections of the tool, or they could remain as a large group. They decided to remain as a large group. Because there was only three members in the Yellowhead Junior High working group splitting into smaller groups was not a feasible option. I obtained permission to audio record the audit sessions.

As mentioned previously, there are four sections to the audit tool. As stated by the original authors of the tool, the most important section to complete is Section 1, as it provides an overview of the topics covered in the rest of the audit. When the groups were preparing to begin the audit, I pushed the groups to complete at minimum Section 1, and then additional sections could be completed based on interests of the working groups and if time permitted.

Section 1 took the two groups between 45 to 75 minutes to complete. Yellowhead finished this section slightly faster as there was less discussion with only three working group members versus six at Prairie Rose. Each group designated a facilitator who read each question aloud and kept the group moving through the series of questions. Some questions provoked a lot of discussion and disagreement while others were met with unanimous agreement almost immediately. I recorded the groups' final answer in either the "yes" or "no" column of the audit tool as well as filled in the

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additional columns with indicators and recommendations for action. Many times I found myself encouraging the group to complete the "indicators" and "further explanations/ recommendations for action" columns, as they would often just answer "yes" or "no" to the questions. Because this project was a pilot of the audit tool in the Canadian context, I encouraged staff to let me know if any of the questions were unclear or unsuitable so I could make a note of that for future revisions of the tool. There were a couple of questions that I was asked to make notes of for revisions.

At the conclusion of Section 1, each group then completed the "Priorities for Action" page, which asked about the level of priority for three broad topics out of Section 1. Following the completion of the "Priorities for Action" I did a check-in with each group asking them if they wanted to proceed with the other sections of the tool or stop for the day. Prairie Rose working group expressed they were drained and wished to stop for the day. Yellowhead decided to complete the parent/guardian part of Section 4 of the tool.

At the end of the sessions, I asked the groups if they wished to complete the remaining sections of the tool another day. Although many of the staff expressed that they would like to complete the tool, and they saw the benefit in doing so, they felt they could not donate additional time to its completion on top of the post-audit focus group that still needed to occur. Unfortunately neither school completed the audit tool in its entirety.

3.3.6. *Data Analysis*

Questionnaire responses for each school were recorded in an excel document. I had a family member cross-reference the data to check for any entry errors. Simple descriptive analysis were performed on the data in excel. The data were compiled and basic frequencies were then presented for each Likert question. The responses to the open-ended question of the questionnaire were compiled and reviewed for any common themes across results.

I transcribed verbatim the recordings from the four pre and post-audit focus groups and the two audit sessions. I read each of the transcripts in their entirety once before starting the coding process. A comparative method was used for coding the data.

In using a comparative method, passages of text in the transcript were identified for the meaning that they carried with respect to the research questions and Dei's principles of anti-racism education. Specifically, I read for passages of text that discussed or could be categorized as principles of anti-racism education. These passages were coded as items like "marginalization of certain forms of education" and "institutional barriers," which corresponded to their meaning. Secondly, I looked for passages that related to the objectives of my research questions – feedback on the audit tool and audit process, strengths and weaknesses in school policies and practices, discussion and reflection among staff, and suggested future action plans. These passages were coded as "actions from tool" and "dialogue and awareness raising" and others. Codes relating to the specific research questions were compiled together to create overall themes and direct the write-up of the results section.

3.3.7. *Knowledge Translation*

A key part of this project for me was sharing back the results of the staff questionnaires and the audit with the school working groups. At the completion of the data collection phase, but especially after the audit session, many of the staff were left with questions on how to best address some of the concerns or ideas that came forth from the audit, as well as suggested resources. For each working group I prepared a typed version of the audit tool that included all of their responses. I also drafted a two-page document with the results of the staff-wide questionnaire. Finally, I created a two-page report-card format summary of the audit tool results (see Appendix E). The report card format provided strengths and weaknesses in each main topic area as well as suggested next steps.

4. Results

This section provides an overview of the data gathered regarding policies, practices, and procedures that support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination within Yellowhead and Prairie Rose Schools. The results are presented in three sections. Section One and Two present the results from the staff-wide *Building off School Strengths* questionnaire and pre-audit focus group for Yellowhead and Prairie Rose School consecutively. Section One and Section Two provide contextual data for each school in terms of how the staff perceives and understands their school currently supporting cultural diversity and addressing race-based discrimination. Section Three reports on the findings and lessons learned from the audit process and post-audit focus group. Section Three reports the results for both schools together.

4.1. Yellowhead Junior High School

4.1.1. *Section One – Understanding the Yellowhead Junior High School Context*

This section reports on the data gathered from the staff-wide "Building off School Strengths" questionnaire and the pre-audit focus group held with the staff working group.

"Building off School Strengths" Staff Questionnaire

The "Building off School Strengths" Questionnaire was completed by 23 (65.7% response rate) staff during a staff meeting in May 2013. In terms of school roles, the majority (n=19) of respondents identified as teachers, one as an administrator, and one as a support staff. Participants ranged in the number of years working at the school from less than 2 to over 20, with the majority of staff (57%) having worked between five and ten years. The majority of staff identified their racial/cultural/ethnic background as

Canadian or Caucasian (65%), while only a small minority identified as non-White/non-European (13%).

Likert Scale Questions

In regards to the school environment, the vast majority of staff agreed that Yellowhead is committed to providing an environment that is welcoming, safe and inclusive for staff (96%) and students (87%) (Table 1.1). Two-thirds of staff agreed that there were adequate policies, practices, and procedures in place to address race-based discrimination. More staff agreed that race-based discrimination is adequately addressed through school practices (65%) than through school policies (52%). Staff perceived race-based discrimination to be a greater problem within the school community (60%) than within the school setting itself (43%).

In terms of school staff training, less than a quarter of school staff agreed the school provides sufficient cultural diversity (22%) or anti-racism (14%) training. Almost all staff (91%) however agreed that they would participate in cultural diversity/anti-racism training. In terms of familiarity with school board policies, slightly more participants were familiar with the Multicultural Education Policy (43%) than the Aboriginal Education Policy (36%). Just over half (59%) of the staff agreed that there are sufficient opportunities to formally discuss issues of cultural diversity within the school.

With respect to behaviours and beliefs, more staff agreed that there are clear consequences for students (78%) engaging in race-based discriminatory behaviour than for staff (64%). Despite high levels of agreement for the school having clear consequences for discriminatory behaviour, three quarters (74%) of staff felt confident to deal with a racist incident involving a student, and less than half (48%) felt confident to deal with a racist incident involving a co-worker. All respondents agreed that schools should play an important role in supporting racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, and only 13% agreed with the statement that schools with little or no racial, ethnic, or cultural diversity are more harmonious.

A final note from the survey results is the relatively high percentages for the "neither agree or disagree" category for some questions. It would be interesting to know why so many people chose this category for their response and if staff really do not

know, or whether it indicates a poor understanding of the issues of racism, race-based discrimination, etc.

Table 1.   Results of Yellowhead Junior High School "Building off School Strengths" Staff Questionnaire May 2013 (n=23)

	Responses (%)		
	Strongly Agree & Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT			
My school is committed to providing a workplace environment that is welcoming, safe, and inclusive for *staff* from varied racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.	96	4	0
My school is committed to providing an environment that is welcoming, safe, and inclusive for *students* from varied racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.	87	9	4
Within my school, there are adequate policies, practices, and procedures in place to address race-based discrimination.	66	17	17
Race-based discrimination is a problem in my school.	43	22	35
Race-based discrimination is a problem in the community in which my school is located.	59*	27*	14*
SCHOOL TRAINING			
My school provides sufficient cultural diversity training.	22	22	56
My school provides sufficient anti-racism training.	14*	32*	54*
I would participate in cultural diversity/anti-racism training if provided.	91*	0	9*
I am familiar with the Edmonton School Board's Multicultural Education Policy.	43	26	30
I am familiar the Edmonton School Board's Aboriginal Education Policy.	36*	28*	36*

	Responses (%)		
	Strongly Agree & Agree	**Neither Agree or Disagree**	**Disagree & Strongly Disagree**
There are sufficient opportunities to formally discuss issues of racial and cultural diversity in my school.	59*	14*	27*
BEHAVIOURS			
Within my school, there are clear negative consequences for *staff* engaging in race-based discriminatory behaviour.	64*	18*	18*
Within my school, there are clear negative consequences for *students* engaging in race-based discriminatory behaviour.	78	9	13
BELIEFS			
Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity are beneficial to a school.	91	9	0
Schools with little or no racial, ethnic, or cultural diversity are more harmonious.	13	35	52
Schools should play an important role in supporting racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.	100	0	0
I believe my school adequately addresses race-based discrimination through *school policies*.	52	31	17
I believe my school adequately addresses race-based discrimination through *school practices*.	65	26	9
I feel confident in my ability to deal with a racist incident involving a *student* at school.	74	9	17
I feel confident in my ability to deal with a racist incident involving a *co-worker* at school.	48	17	35

*n = 22

Open-ended Question

There were six comments reported under the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire. A couple of the comments expressed how the school was doing well in terms of supporting diversity but expressed there were still issues of discrimination

and marginalization. Specifically FNMI students were identified as experiencing marginalization.

> *I am proud of our school and our policies; however there are times when I feel there are racial tensions in the building. Some groups feel they are "in power" because they are the majority.*

> *I find there are many instances of race-based discrimination between minority groups – ignorantly using offensive terms playfully, or bringing cultural opinions with them from home.*

There was one comment that a staff member felt the White students were also experiencing discrimination,

> *White students also feel discriminated against and feel mis-treated.*

Pre-Audit Focus Group

The purpose of conducting a pre-audit focus group was to gain a more in-depth understanding of the school culture, initiatives, and processes in regards to supporting cultural diversity and addressing race-based discrimination. Six themes emerged from the pre-audit focus group, each of which is described below.

Theme 1: Support for Cultural Diversity but not Anti-racism Initiatives

When asked to describe some of the initiatives and activities the school currently did to support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination, the group readily listed a number of different programs and activities offered that supported culturally or religiously diverse students, or celebrated the culture diversity of the school. For example, the school offered in-school cultural and leadership programs for FNMI and refugee students, provided prayer rooms for Muslim students, and held an annual school community event that involved sharing of cultural foods.

> *We have this one event when the school community comes together and parents' prepare dishes and we have like a big family dinner. There's delegates from the province who are invited, the city, different schools. It's a half day event. (group member 1)*

The group was unable to identify any school initiatives encouraging anti-racism education or addressing race-based discrimination other than dealing with incident

cases on an individual basis. An advisory period, in which students from across the grades were mixed into classes for one period, was identified as one way the school attempted to bring the students together. Yet, what the class did during the advisory period was dependent on the teacher, and therefore did not necessarily focusing on building inter-cultural or inter-group understanding and relationship building.

Theme 2: Acknowledging Racial Tensions and Silenced Cultural Expressions

Openly acknowledging racial tensions within the school, and some students' insecurity about expressing their cultural identity was another theme that emerged from the data. The working group openly acknowledged racial tensions that they had observed within the school.

> *For me, I at times see a definite tension between the different groups, and just addressing that in general with the population. (group member 3)*

Although, no group member disagreed that racial tensions did exist between certain groups within the school, one group member expressed the racial/cultural divisions of students becomes even more apparent when the students enter high school. The group also vocalized concern that some minority groups at the school seem uncomfortable in expressing their culture at school.

> *I notice sometimes that students feel that, not ashamed, but not comfortable expressing their own culture, cultural background. (group member 3)*

Theme 3: Informal Processes versus Formal Practices or Policies

It was repeatedly identified during the focus group that many of the staff supports in regards to working with culturally and linguistically diverse learners occurred at an informal level. In terms of initiatives to support school staff to better understand and work with the cultural diversity of the student population, the group expressed that there has never been anything "formally planned" but there are "good resources" and "people to contact if there is something I don't understand" in terms of questions about cultural practices. When asked how staff knew who to contact with questions, the group replied it was pretty obvious which staff members to go to, and staff mostly just figured it out as they went along.

In terms of space for formal discussion among staff about cultural diversity and race-based discrimination, again the group identified there has never been formal opportunities, but there was space for informal discussions. The group believed the staff at Yellowhead were fairly "tightly knit" which allowed for teachers to be "pretty open to discussing things" and comfortable to ask questions.

> *I'm comfortable to ask, which I think is important because sometimes students will try and get away with things 'oh she doesn't know a lot about our culture or religion, so I'm going to use that as an excuse to try and get away with something' but I can always check with staff members, and be like, is this really true? (group member 2)*

The staff mentioned different occasions where students can learn about other cultural and religious practices; however, again this was done at an informal level based on the teacher's willingness for discussion.

> *During Eid, I have a lot of open discussions with those who don't celebrate Eid about what it is, what it is about, and the students participate and so that's a learning opportunity. But again it's not formal, but all the kids learn. I think they do come to appreciate. (group member 1)*

The underlying assumption with informal conversations that may occur in the classroom during religious holidays or celebrations is that these kinds of discussions do not hold an important position within the prescribed curriculum.

Theme 4: Institutional Barriers: Unknown School Policies, Teaching Resources, Curriculum, Time, and Segregated Programming.

Although not explicitly stated as so, the working group members identified a number of institutional barriers to being able to support racially and culturally diverse students. Poor staff knowledge of any school anti-racism, anti-discrimination or equity policy, and uncertainty as to how the School Board Multicultural Education policy was implemented and enforced in the school was highlighted by the group as a significant barrier. Insufficient access to culturally appropriate teaching resources was identified as a key barrier,

> *I think resources are a problem. I mean, even in terms of what kids see in your classroom, if they feel represented. I don't know if any kid really feels that in most of the classrooms in our school because I mean generally*

teachers go out and buy their own posters, and posters are expensive.
(group member 2)

Access to other culturally appropriate resources such as posters and other classroom decorating materials were also identified as a barrier to students being represented within the school. Other barriers included, rigid curriculums that "locked" teachers into teaching specific material, and limited time for teaching planning and preparation. Additionally, the segregation of student programs by cultural/ethnic or religious groupings was also identified as a weakness in school practice in promoting cultural diversity and understanding.

> *The FNMI meetings they have, it seems, it might be purposeful in the way it is set up, it seems very secretive to me. I mean I'm on the other side of the school, but I'd like to be involved just because I'm interested in their culture and traditions. I know I can't speak on behalf of the students, but I'd like them to be more confident in their culture. (group member 3)*

Theme 5: Role of Education System in Marginalizing Certain Voices and Forms of Knowledge

Towards the end of the focus group, the group was starting to identify ways in which the education system marginalized certain forms of knowledge, such as Indigenous knowledge, and marginalized the voices of racialized students.

> *When I was at the U of A and doing like science education, the issue I always had was the FNMI perspectives were always relegated to an italicised bullet point in the curriculum. It seemed like an afterthought. It wasn't something that was focused on considering the Canadian history. I thought that was kind of a weakness in terms of the overall structure. (group member 3)*

> *I don't know if this is relevant, but when my students first started writing short stories, my students are predominately not White, they would be writing stories about a kid named Jon, or a kid named Bryan with blonde hair and blue eyes. They are not writing stories about themselves right? (group member 2)*

This last quite in particular exemplifies who's perspectives, identities, and ideas are valued within the Alberta education system, and students recognize and conform to this by writing pieces that are do not reflect their own cultures and identities.

Theme 6: Negotiating Identities: Who are the Minority Students in a Predominately Non-White School?

A final theme that emerged from the pre-audit focus group concerned students and staff negotiating and defining identities in a predominately non-White school. Despite the majority of the students being non-White, there were conflicting comments as on whether the staff thought the school was culturally/racially/linguistically diverse.

> *We are not a diverse school – 85% of the students are from one ethnic groups and coded as English as a second language students…we are not diverse, but we do have little pockets of different cultures. (group member 1)*

The pre-audit focus group also revealed poor understanding of what it means to support culturally diverse learners within the school. "Supporting diversity" was perceived as initiatives to support defined ethnic groups within the school versus valuing overall the diversity of perspectives and knowledge that all students within the school contribute. Some of the discussion reveals there is a misunderstanding of racism being an issue of power. As the quote below reveals, racism is conceptualized as working against the group that is in the minority, numbers wise, which conceals the premise that power and privilege can be held by a few individuals.

> *The issue I see is, and this sounds bad, if we were to cater to our ethnic minority, it would leave out [pause] like how to develop that balance? If we were to represent the majority of [the school] as the ethnic minority that would leave out the Aboriginals and Caucasians, anybody else who doesn't fit into that. (group member 1)*

> *I wonder as a whole how much the students want to blend in too? Like do they want to celebrate their culture here at school, or is that a personal thing and while they are at school do they just want to be part of Canadian culture, whatever that is? (group member 1)*

The last quote demonstrates a very basic understanding of supporting diverse students within the school setting by framing culture as solely something that is celebratory rather than something that is part of one's identity, that also contains ways of knowing and seeing the world.

Summary of Yellowhead School Context

Yellowhead is a predominately non-White school with a White majority teaching staff. The pre-audit data gathered from the staff-wide questionnaire and pre-audit focus group highlight that the staff place importance on creating safe and welcoming learning environments for students and staff, yet it is also acknowledged that racism, racial tensions and marginalization of groups of students occurs within the school. A lack of formal policy, familiarity with school board policy, and many informal processes and practices act as barriers to adequately addressing race-based discrimination within the school.

There were instances in the discussion where the working group identified areas of systemic racism such as the marginalization of certain voices and forms of knowledge within the education system; however the discussion also revealed problematic ways in which supporting culturally diverse learners and addressing racial discrimination is conceptualized by staff.

4.2. Prairie Rose Junior High School

4.2.1. *Section Two – Understanding the Prairie Rose Junior High School Context*

This section reports on the data gathered from the staff-wide "Building off School Strengths" questionnaire and the pre-audit focus group held with the staff working group.

"Building off School Strength" Staff Questionnaire

The questionnaire was completed by 22 school staff (73.3% response rate) during an after-school staff meeting. In terms of roles within the school, 13 of the staff identified themselves as teachers, one as an administrator, seven as support staff, and one questionnaire had no response. Again there was a wide range (less than 2 and greater than 20) in years worked at the school, with the majority (68%) of the staff having worked at the school for less than ten years. The majority of staff identified their racial/ethnic/cultural background as one of, or combination of: White, Caucasian, Canadian, or European-decedent (82%).

Likert Scale Questions

In regards to the school environment, all staff expressed that Prairie Rose is committed to providing an environment that is welcoming, safe and inclusive for staff and students (Table 1.2). Slightly more staff identified race-based discrimination as a problem within the school community (55%) than in the school setting (40%). Just over two-thirds (68%) of staff agreed there are adequate policies, practices, and procedures in place to address race-based discrimination with more staff agreeing the school adequately addresses race-based discrimination through school practices (82%) than school policies (68%).

Under the category of school training, more staff agreed there is sufficient cultural diversity (32%) than anti-racism (14%) training, however both numbers are low. There is substantial support (73%) for staff participation in diversity and anti-racism training if provided. There is almost equal familiarity with the School Board's Multicultural Education (33%) and Aboriginal Education Policies (32%) among staff. Just over half (54%) of the staff agreed there were sufficient opportunities to formally discuss issues of cultural diversity within the school.

With respect to behaviours and beliefs, slightly more staff agreed that there are clear consequences for students (77%) engaging in race-based discriminatory behaviour than for staff (73%). However, just two-thirds (68%) of staff felt confident in their ability to deal with a racist incident involving a student and only one-third (36%) felt confident to deal with a racist incident involving a co-worker. Almost all staff (95%) agreed that racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity are beneficial to a school, and the same percentage agreed that schools should play an important role in supporting racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, while 14% of respondents agreed that schools with little or no racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity are more harmonious.

Table 2.   ***Results from Prairie Rose Junior High School "Building off School Strengths" Staff Questionnaire April 2013 (n=22)***

	Responses (%)		
	Strongly Agree & Agree	**Neither Agree or Disagree**	**Disagree & Strongly Disagree**
SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT			
My school is committed to providing a workplace environment that is welcoming, safe, and inclusive for *staff* from varied racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.	100	0	0
My school is committed to providing an environment that is welcoming, safe, and inclusive for *students* from varied racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.	100	0	0
Within my school, there are adequate policies, practices, and procedures in place to address race-based discrimination.	68	32	0
Race-based discrimination is a problem in my school.	40*	40*	20*
Race-based discrimination is a problem in the community in which my school is located.	55	41	4
SCHOOL TRAINING			
My school provides sufficient cultural diversity training.	32	27	41
My school provides sufficient anti-racism training.	14**	38**	48**
I would participate in cultural diversity/anti-racism training if provided.	73	18	9
I am familiar with the Edmonton School Board's Multicultural Education Policy.	33**	29**	38**
I am familiar the Edmonton School Board's Aboriginal Education Policy.	32	27	41
There are sufficient opportunities to formally discuss issues of racial and cultural diversity in my school.	54	23	23

	Responses (%)		
	Strongly Agree & Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree & Strongly Disagree
BEHAVIOURS			
Within my school, there are clear negative consequences for *staff* engaging in race-based discriminatory behaviour.	73	27	0
Within my school, there are clear negative consequences for *students* engaging in race-based discriminatory behaviour.	77	18	5
BELIEFS			
Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity are beneficial to a school.	95	5	0
Schools with little or no racial, ethnic, or cultural diversity are more harmonious.	14	36	50
Schools should play an important role in supporting racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.	95	0	5
I believe my school adequately addresses race-based discrimination through *school policies*.	68	32	0
I believe my school adequately addresses race-based discrimination through *school practices*.	82	18	0
I feel confident in my ability to deal with a racist incident involving a *student* at school.	68	14	18
I feel confident in my ability to deal with a racist incident involving a *co-worker* at school.	36	46	18

*n = 20   ** n = 21

Open-ended Question

There were seven responses to the open-ended question in section three of the questionnaire. The majority of the comments highlighted general concerns with discrimination between students of different cultural backgrounds, and three comments discussed concerns with "reverse racism" occurring at the school,

At times our school has a bit of reverse racism taking place. I have seen times when the White children have a difficult time.

The final comment suggested hope for issues of cultural diversity and race-based discrimination to begin to be addressed at the school board level.

[The School Board] is starting to make diversity a priority. They have made significant gains in providing support for LBGTQ persons. I am optimistic that diversity/discrimination will soon follow.

It may be useful to note that the School Board has had a multicultural education policy in place longer than the gender and sexual orientation policy. Therefore it may be optimistic to believe issues of racial discrimination will soon follow within the Board.

Pre-Audit Focus Group

The pre-audit focus group at Prairie Rose Junior High was held in late May 2013. The purpose of the focus group was again to better understand the practices and policies the school engaged in to support cultural diversity and reduce race-based discrimination, strengths and weaknesses in current school policies and practices, and the importance of supporting diverse students and addressing discrimination. Five main themes were identified from pre-audit focus group.

Theme 1: Greater Support for Cultural Diversity than Anti-racism Initiatives

School staff readily identified a number of events and activities the school did to support the cultural diversity of the students such as celebrating cultural festivities/holidays (e.g. National Aboriginal Day, Diwali, Chinese New Year) and hosting multicultural days. The school also offered in-school programming for FNMI students and refugee students, as well as alternative sporting options such as cricket.

We also had Chinese New Year this year, which I thought went really well cause the kids did a lot of Chinese cultural kind of things. What I've noticed in the past is if you kind of let the kids choose, you really get two cultures being expressed during some of the events. If we say, 'okay it's going to be French, or it's going to be Chinese' or each class is given a particular culture that they are going to do, then it's a better representation of the entire school instead of just only hearing about these two particular cultures. (group member 4)

The topic of race-based discrimination was not brought up until I further probed the group, asking if there were any initiatives to prevent or address it.

I don't know that we have any activities that are actively looking at race-based discrimination. I mean we deal with it if it comes our way. (group member 1)

Although the majority of the discussion centered on activities that supported the cultural diversity of the students, at the end of the focus group, one participant specifically identified the need for the school to better address discrimination.

I think addressing discrimination, for me, is the bigger point, cause I think we need to actively teach that. A lot of our kids come from countries where that's just what they understand, it's just the way it's been. There's always been this cultural tension or religious tensions or whatever. I feel that we need to be a little bit more active about that. Cultural diversity is nice cause it's social studies, right, I mean you explore the different cultures that exists, you add to your knowledge and understanding, so that deepens understanding, and that's certainly nice to have cause it feels good. But the addressing the discrimination seems, to me, a bigger issue. (group member 1)

After the group member shared the above quote, there was more support around the table and acknowledgement for the need to do more work; however it was phrased as "sensitivity training" and "anti-bullying" work with students, again down playing the racial element.

Theme 2: Institutional Facilitators and Barriers

The staff identified numerous institutional practices that had been incorporated into the school structure that facilitated supporting culturally diverse students and their families. These included items such as a prayer room for Muslim students, offering culturally appropriate foods at school functions and breakfast programs, and interpretation services for parents and guardians.

We also try to provide services to the families in their own language because they haven't mastered English yet. So we try to make them feel comfortable coming into the school and having a meeting for example with interpreters so they can communicate. (group member 3)

Acknowledgement of the School Board's Multicultural Education policy was another facilitator to supporting cultural diversity.

> *I think Board policy is pretty clear too, that schools are to be responsive and welcoming of students of all faiths, backgrounds, and that's, and I guess it's good because it means that people are going to do it for the most part right. It's inherent in our legislation and in our policies. (group member 2)*

A number of institutional barriers were identified as prohibiting greater support for meeting the needs of culturally diverse students. Too few intercultural support staff, under-representation of racialized staff, school funding structures, and time were cited as the main barriers. With 28 different languages spoken within the school, intercultural support staff play a key role in brokering between students and their families and school staff; however inadequate numbers of intercultural support staff at the District level severely restricts the schools access to these support staff.

> *We lack enough intercultural support workers in a lot of schools. We have one person for about five or six different key languages downtown. Then for students from less common languages they have only contract people so they just bring them in for certain events or experiences and so they're not always readily available to us. That really makes it difficult to have meaningful parent, home, school communication when we don't have that kind of communication in their language... Especially when we have a lot of illiterate families in our District too. (group member 2)*

Another barrier that was mentioned was the lack of teachers and administrators of colour working within the education system.

> *It's also nice for student to see people of colour in our schools, and that's something that still hasn't really, we haven't managed to change that, not adequately. Sort of system wide, the majority of the teachers are still White, middle-class people who are Anglophones. (group member 2)*

School funding structures that allocate funding to cultural/ethnic group specific programming was highlighted as another barrier to running programs that foster intercultural connections and cooperation. For example, one group member explained a lot of the funding that the school gets to support students is allocated for specific groups only such as Aboriginal students, or English second language students. This makes it difficult to create programs that work towards bringing students together from various

backgrounds. Finally, time restrictions of staff were identified as a barrier for staff to be able to plan properly and run initiatives or activities.

> *More and more pressure is being put on schools to figure this out – so here's your community, here's the issues in the community, what are you schools going to do about it? But at the same time could you please get through all the programs of studies and make sure that the kids are learning adequately to progress to the next level, which is our mandate, but there's all these other things that are required….we as educators are really happy to support any of that but we don't have the time to make it happen. We just don't, because we wouldn't get our jobs done. (group member 1)*

The above quote, however, not only demonstrates time restraints of staff, but also illuminates the increasingly responsibilities being placed on schools to deal with issues above and beyond simply providing education for students. As the staff expressed, they are expected to provide supports to students and families beyond educational demands with little to no additional help to do so, leaving staff feeling strained to complete their job.

Theme 3: Informal Processes versus Formal Practices and Policies

An overarching theme that emerged from the data was the divide between informal processes and formal practices or policies. It became apparent that a number of the initiatives and activities the school engaged in to support diverse learners were done at an informal level. For example, the school had no formal religious headdress policy; however students were not discouraged from wearing cultural/religious attire (e.g. Hijab on sport teams).

Professional development on cultural competency and diversity training was available at some teacher/admin professional development days; however it was up staff's digression as to which seminars to attend during the day.

When asked about formal opportunities to discuss issues of cultural diversity and discrimination, the monthly staff meetings were identified as the formal space for discussions; however it appeared that most conversation and topics happened in an informal way if a staff member chose to bring it up.

We have a general staff meeting every month and that's always an opportunity to bring up anything of concern, like what's happening out there. For example one would have been when we were deciding how do we accommodate our Muslim kids with the prayer issue. (group member 1 and 3)

Many staff also expressed that a lot of their learnings about cultural practices, beliefs, and traditions came from informal sharing sessions or interactions with other staff, students, parents, and ethno-cultural consultants who worked at the school.

Sometimes we will do it with e-mail or face-to-face conversations. Let's say for example we've received some information through an ethno-cultural consultant about specific issues within a certain type of ethnic group and we will share that with each other. But that's informal. (group member 3)

The challenge with practices and procedures occurring at an informal level means all staff do not necessarily receive the same information, knowledge, or skills, which contributes to inequities across staff.

Theme 4: Understanding the Greater Societal Context of Student's Lives

It was recognized that many of the issues students, in particular immigrant and Aboriginal students were dealing with at school, were related to larger issues faced by the students in life. In particular, staff discussed the legacy of the residential school system has still impacting the Aboriginal students engagement with the traditional school system.

Understanding that some parents worked two, three jobs to support their families was one barrier the school had in connecting with parents and increasing parental involvement in their child's schooling. The provision of child care was flagged as another barrier the school was addressing through providing baby-sitting services during parent evening sessions.

Child care is massive when we are trying to go get their parents to come, they have big families. We are providing babysitting, for the parents when they come to our evening sessions, and I think for some of our parents if we could provide things during the day time. Again that comes down to resources. (group member 2)

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Because the working group staff had a good understanding of the community in which the school was located and the background of the families it served, the school staff located some of the barriers of student success and parents accessing the school in larger contextual factors impacting the lives of students and families as opposed to the status quo which places blame within the individual and family.

Theme 5: School as a "Support Hub" and Working with Communities

A theme that emerged from the data was the outreach and importance the school placed on connecting and forming partnerships with the broader school communities and community agencies.

> *We are really encouraged to have partnerships with the community and other agencies, which really has allowed a lot of people to come into the school and work with our different ethnic groups. We are quite diverse so we have to reach out to a lot of different partners to come in and help us with the different communities. Sometimes even just learning the protocol on how to approach people in an ethnic group and help them feel comfortable to be part of the school. (group member 3)*

Prairie Rose part of a support project that focused on turning the school into a "support hub". As part of

> *The school's hub is a support project. Basically we try to bring all the resources that our newcomer families would need into the school. We are probably the first place where they start to feel comfortable to go and access from help. (group member 3)*

The school offered a number of services to parents and families including parenting, English, and computer classes in the evenings.

A final opportunity addressed by the group to further supporting the cultural diversity of the school was greater parent outreach. As mentioned above, the school staff was very aware of the benefits of building relationships with the parents in terms of student learning and student outcomes. One group member discussed how she had adjusted strategies to increase the turn-out for the school's parent council.

> *School council had nobody show up year one, that was interesting. School council is for parents to be there and run it, it's their thing. I'm just supposed to show up and report, but I was reporting to myself. Once I*

involved the kids in giving a presentation and making food and whatever, then the parents would come. Connecting the parents, phoning each other, those kinds of connections through the kids and through the community works. And we've seen an increase in that, but we can do better for there for sure. (group member 1)

This theme really exemplifies the importance Prairie Rose staff places on connecting with parents/guardians and valuing their role within the school. Through engaging in a "support hub" project, the school is actively trying to make the school a community place where community members feel welcome and safe to enter and participate in the school environment.

Theme 6: Practicing and Suppressing Culture

A number of staff shared stories during the focus group highlighting the student's sense of safety and acceptability in expressing their cultures at school, such as playing cultural music, speaking in their languages, and performing cultural dances. In return of creating a school environment that was welcoming and inclusive to the majority of students from culturally, racially, religiously, and linguistically diverse backgrounds one group member expressed that he felt the staff in a way had to give up their own culture in order to not be offensive to students,

> *I find sometimes you suppress your own culture a little bit like a Christmas time. You gotta kind of watch yourself. Aware that you're not calling it by the wrong name, or be more general. I think we sacrifice sometimes your own culture just to make sure they are recognized. (group member 8)*

Summary of Prairie Rose School Context

Similarly to Yellowhead, Prairie Rose is a predominately non-White school with a White majority teaching staff. The pre-audit data highlights the importance staff places on creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive schooling environments for students and staff, yet it is also recognized that racism, racial tensions and marginalization of groups of students occurs within the school. Prairie Rose provides a number of programs and initiatives for both students and their families within the school, and actively works to increase parental involvement and comfort within the school.

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It was evident, however, that a lack of formal policies and practices and familiarity with school board policies act as barriers to adequately addressing race-based discrimination within the school. Although the working group situated the school difficulties many of the students faced within the broader context of their lives, the role of racism was largely neglected as a contributing factor to racialized students' marginalization and poorer achievement in school.

4.3. Section Three – Findings and Learnings from the School Audit

This section examines the results from the audit process and the post-audit focus group for both schools combined. The opening section reports general feedback from the working groups on the audit tool itself and the audit process. The subsequent section presents the findings from the audit and post-audit focus group according to five main themes that emerged: 1) Identifying strengths and weaknesses in school policy and practice; 2) Promoting dialogue and raising awareness; 3) Fostering future action plans; 4) Locating racism at the institutional level; and 5) Identity and power in predominately non-White schools.

4.3.1.   Feedback on the Audit Tool and Process

How the implementation of the Tool Happened in Practice

The process for the audit occurred much like I had envisioned it with the working groups facilitating the process of working through tool while I recorded notes and provided clarification around questions. The main incongruence between how I envisioned the process and how it actually occurred in practice was we did not work through all four sections of the tool. Staff at Yellowhead completed Section 1 and part of Section 4. Staff at Prairie Rose completed Section 1 only. Time was the primary reason for not being able to complete the entire tool. Although not all four sections were able to be piloted, each school was successfully able to complete Section 1, which was the minimum recommendation for the tool.

General Feedback on the Audit Tool, Audit Process, Group Composition, and Future use of the Tool

Overall participants seemed to like the tool as a mechanism for discussing, reflecting, and evaluating school policies, practices, and procedures.

I think what I liked about it is it helped us to put a little bit more of a focus back on this cause we go through day to day and I think we take some things for granted in terms of what we do. This kind of helped us re-focus. (Prairie Rose group member)

Participants from both groups thought the tool was very thorough; however the overall sense was that the tool was too long. The working groups expressed there were too many questions, some of which were thought to be repetitive and thus could either be removed or combined with other questions. One working group liked the format of the tool, with checkboxes, and noted, "having the definitions at the beginning helped so that people are aware that it is not all overt race-based discrimination, there are some subtleties" (Yellowhead group member). Members of the other group expressed the current formatting made the tool seem a "lot longer than it is" and may be a deterrent to schools completing the entire tool.

Feedback during the post-audit focus groups highlighted that the overall purpose of the audit tool and the larger vision of implementing a tool like this needed to be made clearer at the beginning of the process.

What is the end goal of this, what is the end? You do all this, what is the end that you are trying to achieve? (Prairie Rose group member)

Some participants shared it was a bit vague as to the purpose of working through the tool was, besides supporting a research project to pilot and improve an audit tool. Working group members also expressed that for future use of the tool, staff within the school should know that there is a) a need for the school to implement this tool and b) articulate and see the benefits of completing the tool.

I think anytime you start something that takes a lot of time you have to assess and say, 'is there a real need for this?' and if there is, then you go all out and if it's not needed, like you are doing just fine, then you wouldn't want to, you probably would devote your time to something else. (Prairie Rose group member)

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This comment really speaks to the notion of cultural diversity and racism being relegated as non-important issues in education or not seen as impacting students educational outcomes.

In regards to the composition of the working group, having a diverse group of staff from different positions, different ethnic/cultural backgrounds, and different lengths of time working at the school was seen as important for providing insight and different perspectives on the audit questions. Both groups identified the need to have representation from the administration level (which one group did and one group did not), due to their ability to influence school practices, as well as to have their perspective on issues.

> *Having admin at the table would make that [implementation of ideas from the audit] a little bit easier. Cause if it didn't even come in an official recommendation then they still would be able to hear, 'oh this seems like a priority, that is something we could do for September.' (Yellowhead group member)*

While the Yellowhead working group like the small size of the group for working through the audit, one group member at Prairie Rose suggested the audit tool be completed as a whole staff initiative.

> *We all see the students in a, from a slightly different role- options teachers, humanities teachers, core math/sciences, EA, and administration we all have these very different relationships with students that are very similar and they all work together but, we all have to understand the practice and we all have to understand what it looks like so we can integrate them appropriately to our school practice I think. I wold like to see it done as a full staff, if we were to do that. (Prairie Rose group member)*

Both groups expressed the potential for using the audit tool in other schools in the District. Staff articulated that the tool would probably fit best as part of staff professional development activities.

> *I think honestly school level PD would be the most useful for this, because then you can do those things like address the specific school culture. (Yellowhead group member)*

To do it all at once is overkill, but it we did the first two pieces at the beginning of the year, or in our two PD days that we have at the beginning of the year instead of doing other stuff, and then actively embedded those practices in our teaching or in our work, and then mid-way through the year did another PD day that was a reflective piece, how we are doing, and then at the end of the year, okay so where are we going now, what do we need to do next year? I think we probably all do that a little bit, but made it more explicit and formalized it would be strong. (Prairie Rose group member)

While both groups suggested staff PD as a good placement for the tool, some staff were hesitant to allocate more than one PD day throughout the year due to a number of competing interests in staff development areas. On the positive side, no staff member actively dismissed the idea of having PD in this area.

Summary

Although neither school completed the entire school, significant discussion and reflection was generated from completing Section 1 of the tool. Working groups believed with some revisions and further development, the tool could be incorporated as part of staff PD activities within other schools in the District.

4.3.2. The Audit Tool and Anti-racism Education

This section of the results section relates to the primary research question, *How can a school-based audit tool be useful in guiding the development of anti-racism education within the school setting?* Five main themes emerged from the data from both schools combined, 1) Identifying strengths and weaknesses in school policy and practice; 2) Promoting dialogue and raising awareness; 3) Fostering future action plans; 4) Locating racism at the institutional level; and 5) Identity and power in predominately non-White schools. Each of these themes is discussed in sequence below.

Theme 1: Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses in School Policy and Practice

The focus of one of the secondary research questions was to determine if the audit tool elicited information about the strengths and weaknesses in school policy, practices, and procedures. The two schools had different perspectives on the audit tool's

ability to do this. Staff at Yellowhead school thought the tool was better at identifying weaknesses, and not as effective at capturing the school's strengths.

I feel like it was better for pointing out weaknesses than strengths…because I guess our strengths are more intangible. Right, like it is hard to capture data on, this is going to sound cheesy, on the spirit of the school. Which I think is a strength that we have, but it is hard to identify on this…The audit tool isn't really capturing items like "perceptions of being welcome, or perceptions of togetherness. It sounds smultzy, but I think that's actually a strength of this school…I get that is it hard to quantify, there is not a lot of like, feelings. For me, that's why it is hard to find the strengths in here, because it's a lot more like "oh we don't do that, or we don't have that thing either, but we do have other things. (Yellowhead group member)

As the quote above demonstrats, Yellowhead staff believed the tool was unable to capture some of the more "spirit" pieces of the school as they felt the tool was better at capturing more quantitative measures. As this next quote suggestions, there are certain incongruences between policy and practice that do not necessarily get captured by the audit tool.

Cause policy is one thing, what we actually do is another. (Yellowhead group member)

Whereas staff at Prairie Rose thought the tool was adequately able to capture both school strengths and weaknesses. Some staff members were actually surprised with the numerous initiatives and activities the school engaged in to support cultural diversity and address discrimination.

You don't realize it when you are going through the school year and the day to day stuff, but when you look at this and sit down and analyze it, it actually shows that we do quite a bit, we actually did quite a bit of the survey. The tool was, it occurred to me, that ya there are areas of weaknesses but we also do cover a lot of it. (Prairie Rose group member)

Both working groups said working through the tool brought attention to the numerous initiatives being conducted at an informal level versus having a formal process or protocol.

We are doing a lot informally, not formally. We haven't formalized any of the practices that we at this table are doing, and there are likely many

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practices that people away from this table are currently doing that we are not aware of but might benefit from learning about. (Prairie Rose group member)

For example the staff talked about a lot of informal introductions to support staff, ethno-cultural consultants, and translators that frequented the school from time to time, but no formal introduction to these individuals as support personal that can and should be called upon to better support the schools diverse learners and families.

The problem with learning many skills informally, as shared by one group member, is you start to assume all staff have the same skill set, which is not necessarily true.

There were some little things that sometimes we take for granted, so for example, training to work with a translator. Sometimes we take that for granted because if you've worked in that area quite a bit you think, you kind of think that it is something everybody can do but then you realize that you've picked up certain skills because you've done it for a while, or you've watched other people do it. (Prairie Rose group member)

One staff member drew attention to the importance of having formalized processes to ensure all staff members have the same skills and knowledge.

Just realizing as we were going through this that maybe not all of us as a staff are at the same level. Some people might have a lot of experience working with multicultural, in multicultural settings and other people might have very little if they've come from other places and a lot of us are in between. (Prairie Rose group member)

In addition to the tool highlighting many of the school practices occurring on an informal level, there were three further central gaps or weaknesses that emerged from both schools: 1. the need to better equip staff to identify and discuss issues of racism and race-based discrimination; 2. space for student voices; and 3. minimal supports for Aboriginal students. Each of these gaps is explored in sequence below.

Need to Better Equip Staff to Identify and Discuss Issues of Racism

Different statements from both working groups brought attention to the need for further training or capacity building of staff to identify issues of race-based discrimination within the schools.

I think it [the audit tool] highlights some of the things we should be watching for, or looking at when we are trying to see whether we are meeting the needs of our diverse student population. Or you know, be aware of some of the factors that might be considered race-based discrimination because of maybe a lack of knowledge or lack of clarity about what it is or how it might unfold. (Prairie Rose group member)

Better training in recognizing race-based discrimination was believed to be associated with better consequences and/or better outcomes for students who both experience race-based discrimination and perpetrate race-based discrimination.

I think training on recognizing and what to do about race-based discrimination would help towards better consequences, or better outcomes. (Yellowhead group member)

Further to the need for capacity building among staff to assist in identifying instances of race-based discrimination, the need for better platforms to discuss race-based discrimination emerged when I asked if staff discussed the audit tool with others.

I don't know if I feel like I have the platform to discuss that with other staff. It seems taboo to me. (Yellowhead group member)

This next quote describes the need for formal spaces with dedicated time to the topic.

I think it's intimidating because of the pure size of it, that might be why I haven't discussed it either. Like it's such a big topic. We have five minute conversations with people, I'm not going to bring this up because I only have five minutes. I might even be a little hesitant to mention the work done. (Yellowhead group member)

Although the Yellowhead group member shared their reluctance to discuss the topic with other staff, the member later said they would be okay to discuss it if a formal platform was provided, "if we said that was the topic of discussion today, I would be okay with it."

I think our school is a bit more open to talk about this kind of stuff than a lot of other schools…I think we are more open to it here because, we kind of have to be, and especially new coming in, you have to be able to ask questions like, "is this normal, what's happening in my classroom?" (Yellowhead group member)

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Space for Student Voices

In the current design of the tool, students and their voices are excluded from the process and conversations. Both working groups commented on the need to hear the students' perspectives on the topic.

> *It would be interesting if there was also a student piece, because we might have a perception as adults, but then the kids in those classrooms might have a different perception. That might be something to present to staff as well when you are starting off. So this is what the adults feel, and here is what the kids' perspective is, cause if it is too different then we would probably have some work to do. (Prairie Rose group member)*

Collecting the students' perspectives was viewed as particularly important by staff at Yellowhead because of the unequal representation of racialized staff to students.

> *Especially if you have a site where the staff isn't an equal representation of what the demographics of the school are. Right, you will have a very different outlook on a lot of these questions. (Yellowhead group member)*

Having some students be part of the working group was provided as a possible suggestion for including students' voices, but neither group saw this as an effective approach to capturing the honest thoughts of students due to power imbalances between students and staff. Both groups believed a separate student piece was necessary that would serve as a comparison piece to the staffs' piece.

Minimal Supports for Aboriginal Students

Concern for inclusion and expression of cultural identity of the Aboriginal students was identified as an issue by both schools; however Prairie Rose in particular flagged the need for more supports for the Aboriginal students as a pressing issue.

> *I think maybe as a staff we sometimes need to pay a little bit more attention to the Aboriginal kids, they are probably the ones who feel really left out. Everybody else seems to adjust really well. I think, sometimes it might be because they tend to come at different times in the year and they don't know a lot of other kids. Some of them come from remote communities so to come into a school with all these different cultures, it's kind of a little bit of a culture shock coming in. They tend to be quite shy and withdrawn. So I think that's where maybe where we need to pay a little bit more attention as a staff, I feel. (Prairie Rose group member)*

In particular, some staff felt that the Aboriginal students faced the greatest marginalization and racism within the school.

> *I think they [the Aboriginal students] are the ones who feel most out of place and if anybody experiences negative stereotypes or racism, it's probably that group, I think, even from other groups of kids. I think for that group of kids we definitely have a ways to go. (Prairie Rose group member)*

Over the course of the focus groups, staff members at Prairie Rose shared numerous stories of the former Aboriginal success coach who worked in the school and the excellent work she contributed. The Aboriginal success coach was seen as a key position within the school for providing support to Aboriginal students, improving school attendance rates, and connecting Aboriginal parents and families to the school system and staff. Unfortunately the Aboriginal success coach had moved to a new position, and had not been replaced, leaving a serious gap in supporting Aboriginal student education. Inadequate funding and funding cuts for Aboriginal consultants and other Aboriginal school support staff at the Board level was seen as a major barrier to better supporting staff and Aboriginal students.

> *We have consultants in the District, but I don't think there is enough of them for the amount of schools that we have. They are overwhelmed…there are fewer now, many fewer. (Prairie Rose group member)*

Prairie Rose staff recognised the importance of support staff within the school, especially with providing additional support to Aboriginal students, and other groups of students often needing additional resources to be successful, and expressed frustration with District, and ultimately larger government decisions that provides inadequate funding to support these positions.

This final captures well the continual institutional discrimination against Aboriginal students.

> *It's kind of sad that the newcomers to Canada, they seem to get more attention than the ones that originally started the country and were here first. (Prairie Rose group member)*

Theme 2: Promoting Dialogue and Raising Awareness

The audit tool as a mechanism for raising awareness and promoting dialogue emerged as another theme from both working groups. Both groups talked about the how the process of working through the audit tool had increased their awareness of issues around diversity and race-based discrimination in the school. One group members from Yellowhead even described the audit as an awareness raising tool.

> *For me when I looked through it, I think it's a really good tool for raising awareness. I think the raising awareness is really powerful, like I notice after our first meeting some of the conversations I had with students related back to this, trying to address some of the areas we had talked about as weaknesses, so just being aware is great. (Yellowhead group member)*

Although discussion was an inevitable component of the audit process, since the staff worked in groups to answer the questions, numerous times the audit questions initiated dialogue above and beyond what the question was asking. Some of the audit questions, particularly those pertaining to the curriculum and parental involvement within the school sparked debate and reflection amongst the working groups.

> *I think a big part of your project was that it started the conversation again. Where we go about our day, we think we are going okay, so we never really sit down and talk about it. (Prairie Rose group member)*

Theme 3: Fostering Future Action Plans

Actions stemming from participating in the audit process was another theme that emerged from both schools. Despite conducting the post-audit focus group shortly after the audit, members from both groups shared stories of noticing how their participation in the audit discussion they had with students. Whether they were conscious of it or not, staff shared they found themselves noticing issues relating to the audit tool more within the school. One group member even shared how participating in the process led to a behaviour change in preparation for the upcoming grade nine graduation events.

> *I don't teach a lot of the grade nines, especially a lot of the Muslim girls, but I am reading their names at the assembly for graduation, so I've been going around and asking everybody how to say their names. And they've stopped giving me funny looks and they've started quizzing me in the hallway, 'what's my name?' 'what's my name?' Just to see if I can actually*

say them correctly, if I've been practicing to say them correctly. And I've seen these girls around for three years and I've never known how to say their names and now I do! (Prairie Rose group member)

Two key components of the audit tool was the last column of the table that asked for recommendations for future action, and the 'priorities for action' piece at the end of each major section. The purpose of these two components was to encourage thinking of future steps in addressing the question under consideration and help prioritize which areas the school should focus on addressing. Members of the Yellowhead group did not find that these two pieces helped in directing action planning or priority setting.

I think it's a really good tool for raising awareness, but I didn't get an impression, there is that little section of 'next steps', but I don't feel there is enough focus on that. There isn't enough focus on what can you do to address it and in a timely fashion. To me it is all data collection, which is great, but now what? (Yellowhead group member)

Another group member also described how the 'priorities for action' section was limited in directing next steps.

Even on that [the priorities for action section] it says you can rank an area from 1 to 5 in terms of priority, but there is no section to say, ok this is step one, this is what should happen next. Or even more specific suggestions for what should be done. (Yellowhead group member)

It was a bit premature to assume both schools would have created a formalized action plan, specifically when they had not yet received the results back from the audit. I did, however, ask groups what they thought they would do with the information and experienced they gained from participating in the process. The groups differed in their responses to how they would use the information from the audit. Members of the Yellowhead group talked about using what they had learned in a very general say, stating they would try keeping in mind what they had learned when planning initiatives, and trying to access more of the resources talked about by the tool.

It is keeping these things in the back of our mind as we plan events and activities, communication with parents, just always trying to tie these things in as we go. I don't know if we could do a formal, these are thing we need to do and implement them. (Yellowhead group member)

Maybe just look at areas of growth that you pointed out and see what we can do at the teacher/admin level moving forward. Try and find those resources if they exist. (Yellowhead group member)

In contrast to broad general ideas for using the information, the Prairie Rose working group clearly articulated four key areas as areas for future action: 1. more actively promoting intercultural contact between groups; 2. professional development for staff; 3. securing an Aboriginal success coach position within the school; 4. And communicating learnings and best practices with other schools in the same catchment area.

As mentioned in both the pre and post-audit focus groups, Prairie Rose staff, felt they were doing a good job as a school to support the cultural diversity of students, but that more active work needed to be done to address discrimination and promote intercultural understanding and contact between different cultural groups within the school.

How many Urdu speaking girls do you see talking to anybody else than Urdu speaking boys? Not very often. How many Muslim girls do you see hanging with the Indian girls, not very often. And it only happens when we make it happen…We don't have enough activities that require kids that they are going to work with this group, even in my kitchens in foods. They want to stay with their group, and they don't want to have to work with anybody that's different…everybody who has come from other places, they are used to a monocultual society that has most people following in their religious values and moral code. We could to more, I just don't know what. (Prairie Rose group member)

One group member suggested that they could even work at promoting increased intercultural connection between the parents and families in hopes it would trickle down to the kids as well.

Maybe we have some evenings where the families have to do some activities where they interact with each other because if the parents see, 'hey maybe those people are okay' and maybe they say to their kid, 'look those people over there aren't so bad, maybe we can hang out.' (Prairie Rose group member)

Providing professional development for staff was another key area for future action.

Some good PD to come in and do that work on supporting First Nations kids, or supporting multicultural youth. I think it would be nice to have supporting Aboriginal youth and a session on supporting Muslim youth and maybe throughout a day, with four or five different sessions where we could go and learn about each different cultural group one at a time. (Prairie Rose group member)

As well, to address all the discussion around the need to better support the Aboriginal students within the school, the administrator said one priority over the summer would be to secure a new Aboriginal success coach for the school, a role that was currently empty.

Talking with other schools in the catchment area, specifically the feeder, elementary and the high schools to support greater sharing of best practices was a final area identified for future action work.

It wouldn't hurt at some point down the line to partner up a couple of schools and go see how they are unrolling this kind of learning in their site, or I don't know, some kind of collaborate sharing of some kind between maybe similar sites…if we shared with some of our feeder school then we could get on the same page as far as practices and that would bring our community population and make them really knitted. (Prairie Rose group member)

Theme 4: Locating Racism at the Institutional Level

Locating racism at the institutional level was a theme, that although present throughout all of the phases of data collection emerged as an important theme in the post-audit focus group. More specifically, staff located areas, such as the curriculum, as a site for racism that they had not previously mentioned prior to the audit.

I think our curriculum could go further. I don't mean social studies, because social studies is already quite good…where it's a natural fit and some LA, if teachers look for stories and talk about the oral tradition, but in our other curricula we are still focusing on the old White guys and women you know? We know there are great thinkers from everywhere around the world and every race and religion so why are we not sort of identifying them so kids can feel proud of their history, or connect somehow with their school here? (Prairie Rose group member)

Staff expressed that a more inclusive curriculum was particularly important for engaging the schools diverse learners more and allowing the students to see themselves reflected in the material.

The under-representation of ethnically diverse staff across the board was also mentioned.

> *Even as a school district right now there is a push to hire more ethnically diverse, like have a more ethnically diverse staff as a district. But we are not there yet. (Prairie Rose group member)*

Thinking on where discussions about racism in education and teaching for diverse learners should occur for teachers also arose.

> *Is it something you address in the training of teachers, like I'm just thinking aloud. Is it something you address in the training of teachers at university? Or once they are within the district, what kind of steps do they take? Where does the responsibility lay or is it equally shared? (Yellowhead group member)*

This theme demonstrates that the staff began to identify multiple different areas in which systemic racism is present within the larger system of education.

Theme 5: Identity and Power in Predominately Non-White Schools

It was interesting how one working group took up the language of "minority students" even though this term is not used within the audit tool. It appeared that since the tool was examining cultural diversity and race-based discrimination there was an automatic assumption that the tool was designed for schools with a racial minority versus racial majority population. Yet, nowhere does the tool state it was designed for a specific demographic context.

> *I still think back to our first meeting when I made the comment about our schools minority versus the city's. To me I think it would be more valuable to focus on the schools minority groups, not the city as a whole. Like, you know cause we do create our own society and that's where those ratios change. At [our] school, they would still be considered the minority according to this assessment tool, but within the school they are not. I do feel that changes your answers quite a bit…For example, I'm doing poetry in LA, I'll focus on Muslim poets, because that's the majority. Where then I won't deal a lot with American/Canadian poets because they are the*

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minority students in my classroom. According to this resources, the way the questions are phrased I'm doing the right thing, is my impression, but I'm not. I'm not hitting all of them. So it's not as diverse as it should be to meet all the students in my class, but I am meeting our definition of minority according to this (Yellowhead group member).

It's interesting, if we were to use this tool, or kind of modify it to have it for kids, I think it would be interesting to look from the perspective, how much do our students cultural experiences outside of school and inside of school, whether they differ to a certain extent or overlap at all. So do our students, let's say our White students, do they feel marginalized, do they feel like they are minority within this school. I know you say students have come to talk to you about certain things, obviously no one has come to talk to me. So I wouldn't know really what these experiences that kids are having. Especially this tool is used to address the general definition of what minority is. For our students here, for our population, how much do they feel marginalized within the greater populating, living in the northeast of [the city], you know what I mean? How much are they aware of what's going on. That could be part of the tool I guess. (Yellowhead group member)

Using the term "minority", and having a concern for the small number of White students in the minority indicates there is a misunderstanding of what racism is. By using the language of "minority students" in reference to the number of students demonstrates that this staff member still perceives racism as existing at the individual level, and against groups who are the least represented numerically versus locating racism as a system of power and equity. These excerpts from participants indicate there is more educational work needed for staff to have an understanding of systemic racism and how it operates within educational settings irrespective of the student demographics.

4.3.3. Summary

Five main themes emerged from the audit process and post-audit focus group data. Four of the themes, identifying strengths and weakness in school policy and practice, promoting dialogue and raising awareness, fostering future action plans, and locating racism at the institutional level, all indicate that the school-based audit tool can help to guide the beginning development of anti-racism education. The final theme, identity and power in predominately non-White schools, suggests that working through the audit tool may continue problematic thinking about racism in educational institutions. Therefore the findings from this research further identifies that the concept of racism is

still poorly understood and raises the need the audit tool to be paired with other anti-racism strategies such as staff anti-racism training.

5. Suggested Revisions for further Development and Improvement of the Audit Tool

This section answers the question, *What are staff suggestions for revisions of the school-base audit tool and audit process for future use within the Alberta public school context?* As this was a pilot project of an audit tool within the Alberta public education context, the information gained from this project is to be primarily used for the ongoing development and improvement of the tool, as well as contribute to the general knowledge about the use of audit tools in education settings for improving supports for culturally diverse learners and addressing race-based discrimination.

As the results illustrated, staff in both working groups provided feedback on ways to improve both the format (e.g. reducing the number of questions) of the tool and the audit process for future applications. The working group members shared a number of things they liked and did not like about the tool, their thoughts on the composition of the working groups, and numerous ideas for how the tool could be combined as part of teacher PD for use in other schools. Based on this feedback, a list of recommendations has been compiled for the further development of the audit tool and audit process for utilizing the tool within the Alberta public school system:

- Engage administrative-level staff early in the process to get their support and buy-in for the tool.
- Create a diverse working group that captures staff from all different levels (administration, support, and teaching), different teaching backgrounds, and different lengths of time at the school. Ensure people from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds and diversity/inclusion champions, who may have a better understanding of inequities, are well represented on the working group.
- Ensure there is representation from Aboriginal staff on the working group. If there is not an Aboriginal staff member, encourage program coordinators or other community members who may work with Aboriginal students in the school to sit on the working group.
- To address differences in power between different levels of staffing positions reinforce the desire of wanting to hear everyone's voices and perspectives

and highlight the purpose of the tool is to identify strengths and weakness in school policy, practices, and procedures, not individual staff performance or behaviours.

- Reduce the number of questions in the audit tool so it is not overwhelming for the group, and so they are able to complete the tool. This will also help to maintain engagement and motivation.

- Ensure prior to beginning the tool the purpose of implementing the tool and the process are made clear to all members of the working group. Provide a clear overview of how working on the tool is part of a larger process of creating action plans for change and implementing those plans within the school.

- Emphasize the purpose of the tool is to examine gaps in policy, practice, and procedures not individual performance or individual events/actions that have occurred.

- Review key terms in the glossary of the tool before starting the tool to ensure a common language is being understood and used across the group.

- Schedule at minimum a two hour time block for completing the tool. Preferably having a half day staff professional development would allow to a good introduction to the tool, and working through the tool with appropriate breaks.

- Schedule time for the group to review the results of the audit and create an action plan based on the results.

- If possible, have someone who is knowledgeable about the tool facilitate in order to help guide the process and keep the group discussions on track.

- Determine ways to incorporate the voices of students and parents/guardians into the audit process.

6.   Discussion

This project sought to answer how a school-based audit tool can be a strategy for guiding the development of anti-racism education. This chapter examines key findings from this project in relation to this question, the three remaining secondary questions, and draws on existing literature for further meaning, understanding and application. The project limitations are addressed at the conclusion of this section.

6.1. School-based Audit tools and Anti-racism Education

Many educators and administrators still fail to acknowledge racism as an issue within Canadian schools and the Canadian education system (Pauchulo, 2011; Dei, 1996, McCaskell, 2010; Skrla et al., 2004). This view has resulted in schools excusing themselves of responsibility for documented inequities and the education systems' role in producing and maintaining these inequities. Skrla et al. (2004) note, even those educators and administrations who recognize the existence of educational inequities often are unsure how to clearly identify, examine, and act upon them. The result of the denial of racism in education and/or uncertainty in how to address racial inequalities has led to persistent inequities in educational outcomes across population groups. This research has shown that a school-based audit, focused specifically on cultural diversity and race-based discrimination, can begin to assist staff in discussing and reflecting on issues of cultural diversity and race-based discrimination, and support staff in identifying areas of institutional racism that are contributing to racial inequities in schooling outcomes and arguably health outcomes.

The following section answers the secondary research questions:

a. How does the school-based audit tool illicit information about the
    strengths and weaknesses of school policies, practices, and

procedures that support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination?

b. How can a school-based audit tool be used as a strategy for initiating discussion and reflection on supporting diversity and addressing race-based discrimination within the school environment?

c. How do staff utilize the pilot of the school-based audit tool to develop future action plans that support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination in the school setting?

6.1.1. *Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses in School Policies, Practices, and Procedures*

The school-based audit tool piloted within this study shows promise in helping assist staff identify areas of strength and weaknesses in school policies, practices, and procedures; however the audit process also revealed some problematic ways in which the concepts of diversity and race-based discrimination were taken up by staff.

For both schools, the audit process brought attention to the number of school practices being conducted at an informal level with no formalized policies to back-up these practices. The risk in not having formalized policies or practices is that it does not hold staff and administrators accountable to a basic standard of practice or behaviours. The importance of having formal policies in anti-racism work, is particularly stressed by scholars such as Paradies et al. (2009) in helping to shape and change behaviours often rooted in deeply held beliefs and ideas. As it is widely known within health, simply changing people's knowledge and awareness of an issue is rarely enough to translate into behaviour change (Alvaro et al., 2011). Rosenthal (1990) state "policies and laws become crucial in reducing race-based discrimination as they provide the social foundations needed for altering deep-seated stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory practices" (p.66). As eluted to by Rosenthal, (1990) formal anti-racism and equity policies within schools serve as important functions for encouraging and enabling prejudice and discriminatory practices, in light of whether prejudice views are still held by individuals or not. As much as the audit tool helped identify for the schools gaps in formalized policies and practices, this speaks to the need for school audits to be paired with other strategies, such as policy, to sufficiently address racism in schools.

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A further indicator of success of the audit tool helping to guide anti-racism education was during the post-audit focus groups both groups spoke to institutional forms of racism such as Eurocentric curriculums, and its disregard for other forms of knowledge and ways of thinking. Recognition of the marginalization of certain forms of knowledge within the education aligns directly with Dei's (1996) anti-racism education principles. As Dei (1996) states "to speak about power in the anti-racism discourse is to speak also about the social construction of knowledge" (p. 30). This finding highlights the importance of having curriculum questions within the audit tool, despite initial resistance from staff to ignore curriculum questions because curriculum is determined provincially within Canada. However the difficulty now lies in staff feeling capable in introducing other perspectives and ways of knowing into their classroom teachings. Dei (1996) highlights that a simple way for schools to integrate differing forms of knowledge and perspectives is by actively involving community members within the school who identity with the schools' student population. Dei's (1996) suggestion resonates with Prairie Rose School's call to action to fill their Aboriginal success coach position, a position identified as crucial to the engagement and support of Aboriginal students and their families.

A overall gap the audit tool identified is a poor understanding among some staff about what constitutes race-based discrimination, what institutional racism looks like within education, and a misunderstanding of racism as a system of unequal power distribution and production that has contributed to White dominance. This was evident in a couple of ways such as high response rates of 'neither agree or disagree' to some questions on the staff-wide survey, and with the uptake of specific language such as "reverse racism" and "minority student." What is problematic about the use of "minority student" language was the equating minority White students' experiences of exclusion as comparable to racialized students experiences of racism. As many anti-racism scholars have been calling for, this calls for a greater need to teach issues of racism in teacher education courses (Agyepong, 2010). This also speaks to the need of school boards and administrators to commit to providing ongoing professional development in the area of anti-racism and supporting culturally diverse learners to enable teachers to learn and develop skills (St Leger, 2001). It is crucial to emphasize, as found from

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piloting the audit tool, professional development needs to be mandatory and on a continual basis to be successful (St Leger, 2001; Greco et al., 2011).

In summary, although the audit tool helped identify strengths and weaknesses in school practice, there is evidence for the need of formalized school policies and greater teacher and administer education about racism generally and racism's position within schools. There is evidence that the audit tool started to guide the development of anti-racism education, yet as this work shows, it must be paired with other anti-racism strategies to result in substantive changes in racial inequities within schools.

6.1.2.   A Strategy for Initiating Discussion and Reflection

Engagement with the audit tool by the staff working groups elicited significant discussion and reflection about issues relating to supporting cultural diversity and addressing race-based discrimination within the school. In line with other anti-racism education literature, this study found that activities supporting cultural diversity were more prevalent, more easily discussed, and identified as important and as part of the everyday school culture than initiatives addressing race-based discrimination (Trenerry & Paradies, 2012; Schick, 2010; Morrison, 2007). Both schools discussed in the pre and post-audit focus groups the numerous activities the school engaged in to celebrate the cultural diversity of the school through school festivities and cultural days. In contrast, when asked about initiatives to address-race based discrimination, the common answer from both groups was race-based discrimination was addressed on a "case-by-case" basis after it occurred within the school. Thus it was evident staff viewed discussions of discrimination and racism as only important in response to issues as opposed to having a position within everyday discussions in the classroom and school. Ignoring proactive discussions of anti-racism indicates staff members still struggle to see the role and importance of anti-racism work within education (Morrison, 2007; Skrla et al., 2004).

The more 'celebratory' approach to cultural diversity is aligned with definitions of multicultural education which traditionally focuses on teaching students about cultures different from their own in fun ways that display the dance, dress, and food of these cultures without acknowledging the underlying structural systems of racism that has led to the oppression and subordination of certain cultures and groups in society (Dei, 1996;

Schick, 2010). Many other supports for cultural diversity beyond celebrations and multicultural days were identified by the staff such as: leadership programs for Aboriginal and refugee youth, school accommodations for students with religious needs, such as prayer space, and other supports to assist the needs of culturally diverse families such as translation and child care services. Although all which serve very important functions of support for students and families, these support services are not necessarily anti-racist or critical of the status quo maintaining institutional racism (Schick, 2010). In response to Schick's (2010) argument that school support services may not necessarily be anti-racist, schools providing broad social support services to students and their families aligns with Dei's (1996) anti-racism principle of schools becoming active "working communities." Specifically Prairie Rose School demonstrated taking a "working community" approach through the school being a "hub of support" and offering a number of programs and initiatives to increase school and community interaction. The provision of broad social support services within schools is a key part of reducing racial inequities by equalling the playing field for racialized students and their families.

Overall the audit tool was successful in promoting active discussion and dialogue amongst school staff about issues of diversity and race-based discrimination. Although discussions of cultural diversity tended to dominate the conversations, the tool did allow for a platform for dialogue on issues of race-based discrimination and racism. Some staff even categorized the audit tool as an awareness-raising tool that helped to bring consciousness to issues previously not considered. Skrla et al.'s (2006) writings bring attention to the difficulties and complexities often involved in having school staff incorporate new perspectives about racism and equity, which requires staff to challenge their own beliefs and assumptions and replace them with anti-racist and anti-oppressive ways of viewing the world. Practical tools, like audit tools, can help expose underlying beliefs and assumptions about racism and supporting culturally diverse learners (Skrla et al., 2006).

6.1.3. Fostering Future Action Plans

In regards to the audit tool's ability to foster the development of future action plans, it was a bit pre-mature to know as the post-audit focus groups were held one week following the audit, and before the schools received their written reports from the

audit. Future research should follow-up to see if the working groups or other staff members within the school developed actions plans with the results from the audit. Despite neither school making formalized action plans, both schools shared examples of more immediate actions that occurred from participating in the audit process. Both working groups also shared a number of ways they *hoped* to use the findings from the audit in future planning. Trenerry and Paradies (2012) caution,

> Organizational assessments are an important starting point as well as a process to implement and measure change, but should not be mistaken for the goal itself. The real test of such undertakings is the extent to which organizational commitments to managing diversity and addressing racism are put into practice. (p. 22)

Without a formalized action plans with actionable items, and accountability measures it is feared that the work accomplished from the audit will not fruition. Therefore the audit tool has demonstrated it has the ability to help guide the development of anti-racism education, yet significantly more work is required to translate what is learned from the audit into practice.

6.1.4.   Implications for Public Health

Given the prevalence of racism within educational settings, and the impact of racism on social, educational, and health outcomes, this work argues that beneficial equity and health promoting work can be conducted through anti-racism education. Schools have already been identified in the literature as key settings for public health work because they are conducive to taking a "healthy settings" approach to addressing health that allows for the integration of multiple strategies at multiple levels to create health-supporting environments for students and staff (St Leger, 2001; Hobbin, 2012). Yet public health has remained relatively quiet on addressing institutional racism within schools as a health priority for students, specifically for racialized and Aboriginal students. This is surprising given the critical public health perspective that has been pushing for greater action to address structural determinants of health, such as racism (Gee & Ford, 2011)

The literature already demonstrates the links between poor health and poor educational outcomes (Lavin et al., 1992; WHO, 1996). Some staff in this project recognized the connections through their everyday teachings the links between health and education.

> *I think it's really important to have a tool because our schools are just going to be more and more multicultural as the years progress and we really need to come up with some really good strategies and tools to help us as teachers and schools shape our practice and become better at addressing the needs of all our different learners. And re-kindling or re-locating some manner to hit those kids that always fall through the cracks. Mainly being our First Nations kids or our refugee kids that we work and work and work with, but* **there are so many other mental health challenges that are getting in their way that we are not able to really get them ready for school.** *And Maybe that's another piece, that we maybe, through this learning we can put together some sort of proposal that highlights, or solidifies a mental health support in every school so that we can help the kids that need to have that part of their life dealt with so that they can learn. Our kids that are in difficult families, and our kids that are refugees, and our kids that are struggling mentally and depressed, they can't learn. (Prairie Rose group member)*

This quote highlights the connection educators are making between education and health, locating health and well-being as a requirement for educational learning. This supports the need for greater integration between the two fields of education and public health. Unfortunately as much as it would nice assume many educators are making the connection between education and health St Leger (2001) reminds us that "schools are about maximizing the educational outcomes for students…and their core business is in education and their level of expertise in health issues is minimal" (p. 198). Therefor finding strategies for addressing health that are easily relatable and linked to educational outcomes will improve the chances of uptake and success by educators.

This project suggests that anti-racism education can be a possible route in which to join the two fields together for the mutual benefit of better educational and health outcomes. By framing anti-racism work as mutually beneficial for the education and health of students, educators may be more inclined to buy into strategies, such as audit tools, to help improve the school's policies and practices for supporting diversity students and addressing racism. Working through anti-racism education and participatory tools that encourage dialogue, such as the audit tool, also provides public

health with a teaching and learning opportunity of school staff about the broad social determinants of health. This can help to translate public health knowledge across disciplinary boundaries.

Finally, addressing health inequities at their root causesmoves public health in the direction of tackling very up-stream determinants of health. If public health is serious about working to reduce social inequities within the population, then the root causes of social inequities, such as racism need to seriously examined, understood, and addressed. Because racism is found throughout systems and structures that organize our institutions and aspects of everyday life, public health will be required to work collaboratively with other fields, such as education to be effective and successful. As this project has demonstrated, school-based audit tools can provide a practical tool in which to bring these two fields together to start addressing racism.

6.2. Study Limitations

One main limitation from this study was that neither school completed the audit tool in its entirety. Both working groups felt they could not dedicate any more time to working through the tool, possibly because they were already devoting time for two focus groups as well. The timing of the school year (late Spring), also made it difficult for staff to devote more time, specifically with end of school year activities. Therefore it is still unsure how the questions in Section 2, 3, and 4 are taken up in practice, as well as the time it would take for a working group to complete the entire tool. Both schools did, however, fully complete Section 1 of the audit tool, which was the recommended minimum section of completion.

Another limitation of the study was that in the one school, the members of the Yellowhead working group were selected by the assistant principal, rather than an open call for voluntary members as in Prairie Rose. A limitation in having staff selected for the working group is it could have excluded staff members who had an interest in participating and others who were possible "diversity and inclusion champions" who would have been willing to pursue future actions.

Anti-racism scholars would critique the way in which the audit was conducted did not centre the voices and experiences of those who experience the most disadvantage from the education system, namely students, their parents/guardians, and racialized school staff (Schick, 2010). As anti-racism education scholars have stressed, "the narratives of people who experience disadvantage are central to understanding and addressing the issues that affect their lives" (Schick, 2010, p. 48). I made a conscious decision to not include student voices within the study for simplicity of piloting the audit tool. Both schools, however, did mention that future versions of the tool or future audit processes should include a student component, and this is a key piece that should be added.

One area where the audit tool process initiated a lot of discussion and reflection among the working group members was in regards to supporting Aboriginal students. I think that can largely be attributed to the design of the audit tool which asked questions specific to Aboriginal students and their families and supporting Aboriginal learners. My concern, however, is that the tool does not provide enough in terms of the rationale and historical context for why Aboriginal learners need specific attention and support. Acknowledging the limitations of a tool being able to provide this entire history lesson, and being clear with the purpose of the tool, I suggest that minor additions be made to the tool. I would suggest adding the definition of colonization to the glossary and adding a small section in the introduction explaining why questions about supporting Aboriginal students have been asked separately. The addition of these minor pieces could then serve as an educational piece about the legacy and implications of colonization on Aboriginal students in the school system today. I also strongly recommend that if a school should take up this tool in the future, and in particular if the school serves any Aboriginal students that the working group have an Aboriginal staff member or support person from the community that works with Aboriginal students.

As I reflect back on my methods, because this was a pilot project, it would have been beneficial to conduct a few post-audit in-depth interviews with members of the working group. Specifically, it would have been beneficial to interview an administrative staff member to better understand the future feasibility of organizational assessment tools, the likelihood of them being taken up, and the usefulness of the process and information gained.

Finally, it should be noted again that the purpose of this pilot project was to look at the process of implementing the tool, rather than the effectiveness of the tool at assessing school policy, practice and procedures that support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination. Further research is needed to examine if organizational assessment tools are an effective means to address systemic racism with educational institutions.

7. Conclusion

This project contributes to the body of work that examines audit tools as a practical strategy for schools to identify systemic racism and sources of inequity. The findings act as a reminder that racism remains a poorly understood and under-addressed issue within Alberta schools. Yet, as the results showed, staff are willing to discuss issues of racism and race-based discrimination if given a formal platform in which to do so. The school-based audit tool piloted in this project helped guide the beginnings anti-racism education practice by providing staff a formalized space for the discussion and reflection on school policies, practices and procedures supporting cultural diversity and addressing race-based discrimination, and by drawing attention to strengths and weaknesses in different school policies and practices. The results of the school audits that were presented back to the schools provided staff with suggestions and specific areas in which to begin action for institutional change.

An education system that fully embraces anti-racism education would help position the Alberta education system to better address the persistent racial inequities in educational outcomes documented year after year. In particular, as Alberta continues to become more culturally, racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse, the school system will be forced to examine the root causes of structural inequities in order to uphold accountability to the public for their responsibilities in educating all learners.

As the field of public health continues to promote a social and structural determinants of health approach to addressing health disparities and inequities, the field should further consider anti-racism education as a preventative health action for reducing racial health inequities. By following the already promoted "healthy settings" approach in schools, public health, at present, has a buy-in for working with and in schools to create supportive and healthy learning environments for all students. Using racism as a common determinant of both health and education will allow these two fields to collaborate more, embracing an integrated approach that is necessary for equity work.

7.1. Suggestions for Future Research

Additional piloting of the tool in its entirety is needed to see how Sections 2, 3, 4 of the tool translate to the Canadian context. Unfortunately these sections were unable to be piloted in this project. Future research projects could easily complete the entire tool as long as sufficient time is set aside to do so. The audit tool has been attached as an appendix and I highly encourage readers to use the tool within their own school settings. Further use of the audit tool across Alberta schools may be especially valuable for starting (or continuing) the conversation of racism within schools while providing direction as to where to begin addressing intuitional racism.

Future follow-up research with both schools would be beneficial in identifying if the schools created any action plans or initiatives from participating in the audit. Ideally, once the entire tool is completed by a school, it would be beneficial to examine the longer-term outcomes of completing a school audit. As well, evaluative research needs to be done to determine the actual audit tool's effectiveness in assessing school policies, practices and procedures that support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination.

Finally, as suggested by both working groups, creating a student version of the audit tool is a potentially beneficial endeavor. The current tool lacks a space for both student and parent voices, and as Dei (1996) reminds us, making space for marginalized voices to be heard is a key principle of anti-racism education.

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Appendix A.

School-based Audit Tool

School-based Audit Tool

Assessing current school policies, procedures, and practices that support diversity and address race-based discrimination

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Introduction

Race-based discrimination impacts negatively on targets of, and those practicing, race-based discrimination, as well as the broader community. Experiencing race-based discrimination can 'traumatise, hurt, humiliate, enrage, confuse, and ultimately prevent optimal growth and functioning of individuals and communities' [1]. Race-based discrimination may also have adverse effects for individuals who perpetuate it, distorting their personalities and their perceptions of the world. Furthermore, there are data to indicate a significant association between reported levels of unhappiness and prejudiced attitudes against people from different cultural and racial backgrounds [2].

While this is the case across a range of contexts, recent research identifies schools as a key setting for race-based discrimination, particularly for children and young people from Aboriginal [3, 4] and migrant and refugee backgrounds [3, 5]. This is particularly concerning given evidence indicating such experiences impact negatively on education, social and health outcomes for those from minority groups during childhood, adolescence and in adulthood [4, 6-13]. Addressing race-based discrimination within schools is thus critical.

There is increasing recognition that school-based anti-racism efforts have strong potential to reduce race-based discrimination and to promote diversity and inclusion [22-26]. This rationale is based on a number of factors:

- childhood and adolescence are times of substantial cognitive, social and emotional skill development and so provide a unique opportunity to influence and modify racial attitudes and behaviours [27];

- children and young people spend a significant proportion of their daily lives at school [24];

- schools are important contexts for shaping social norms [28, 29];

- school-based strategies have high potential to target large numbers of children and young people with consequent potential for population level change and for evaluation and modification of intervention strategies [27];

- schools are well suited to multi-level and reinforcing interventions, which have a greater likelihood of producing sustainable outcomes [28, 29];

- school-based anti-racism interventions can influence other priority policy areas such as increasing school retention rates and improving educational achievement [6].

Why conduct a school-based audit?

Organizations such as schools have the ability to either perpetuate or reduce race-based discrimination and can have a powerful influence on the behaviours of individuals and groups with whom they are in contact, both upon people working in such organisations and the clients (e.g. students, parents) that they serve [6]. Furthermore, within the field of anti-racism there is increasing recognition that school-based anti-racism efforts have strong potential to reduce race-based discrimination and to promote diversity and inclusion [22-26]. The **audit tool is about being proactive**; its use does not signify that schools do not currently support diversity and anti-racism. The use of an audit tool is a way of **building upon the positive processes and practices that schools are already undertaking** and/or considering to support diversity and anti-racism.

Purpose of the school-based audit tool

This audit tool has been developed for use in conducting an assessment of current school policies, procedures and practices that support diversity and address race-based discrimination. This tool is intended to provide a picture of what the school is currently doing to address race-based discrimination and to support diversity, to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in such practices. The process of undertaking an audit is a statement to the school community that the school is committed to addressing race-based discrimination and that it both values and is actively committed to supporting diversity.

This audit tool should be used as an assessment guide, rather than a measure of individual or organisational performance. **The purpose of the audit is to provide an opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses in school policy, practice and procedures in order guide further development in supporting diversity and reducing race-based discrimination within the school setting.**

Background to the school-based audit tool

The following audit tool was originally developed upon review of eight school-based audit tools [30-37], which were either part of a school-based anti-racism project or a stand-alone assessment tool, as well as two audit tools relating to Indigenous Australians [38, 39].

There is currently little guidance available to identify effective components of, or approaches to implementing, school-based audit tools and little evidence regarding their utility within Australian or Canadian educational contexts [30, 32-34, 36, 37, 40]. The 10 audit tools were reviewed and appraised according to the following criteria:

- usability (the degree to which the tool can be understood and applied to assess school practices, policies and procedures); and

- comprehensiveness (the extent to which the use of the tool would enable a comprehensive indication of school practices, policies and procedures, across multiple levels, relevant to addressing race-based discrimination and supporting diversity).

With permission from the Australian authors, the audit tool has been adapted to the Canadian education context. Since this is the first time the tool will be implemented, it will need to be refined after input from Canadian schools to determine its effectiveness and acceptability.

How long does the school audit take?

The time required to use the audit tool is yet to be determined, however, the completion time will vary depending on the number of sections of the audit tool that are to be completed (i.e. whether just completing Section 1, Sections 1-4 etc.).

How to conduct the audit

The following audit tool is divided up into Sections (Sections 1-4). It is advised that all schools *complete at least Section 1 of the audit tool*, in order to provide a general picture of school practice in regards to supporting diversity and addressing race-based discrimination. If schools *have* policies relating to race-based discrimination and cultural diversity, it is ideal that all Sections (1-4) of the audit be completed. If schools do not have policies relating to race-based discrimination and cultural diversity, ideally, Sections 1, 3 & 4 of the audit tool would be completed.

Each section consists of a series of questions with boxes to record your answer. There is a "yes" and "no" response box for each question, as well as a box to record indicators (example documents, programs, etc.), then a final box to record recommendations for future action. Active discussion is encouraged!

At the end of each section there is a Priorities for Action check box. Here is where you will decide as a working group how high of a priority various items you have just discussed are for your school in moving forward with potential actions and action plans.

The following table provides an outline of each Section of the audit tool to assist schools in choosing the section that is most relevant to them.

Section 1	Assessing Current School Practice & Procedures

Section 1 assesses school practices and procedures relevant to addressing race-based discrimination and to supporting cultural diversity, providing an indication as to the strengths and areas for improvement in regards to such practice.

Please note: This section aims to provide an assessment of current school procedures and practices that support diversity and address race-based discrimination, to provide a general overview of practice in these areas. It is recommended that schools at least use this section to assess relevant school practice.

Section 2	Assessing School Policy

Section 2 is for use in assessing the comprehensiveness and sufficiency of school policies which aim to prevent and/or address race-based discrimination and support ethnic/cultural diversity. e.g. Equal Opportunities, Anti-racism or Multicultural policies.

Please note: This section is only relevant to schools which have such policies which aim to prevent and/or address race-based discrimination and support cultural diversity.

Section 3	Assessing School Practice in Terms of Monitoring, Reporting and Addressing Incidents of Race-based Discrimination

Section 3 is for use in assessing current school practice in terms of monitoring, reporting and addressing incidents of race-based discrimination.

Please note: This section enables a more detailed and thorough examination of the current school practice in terms of monitoring and reporting incidents of race-based discrimination, than the questions outlined in Section 1 allow. This section is recommended if the school would like a more in-depth indication as to current practice in this area.

Section 4	Supporting the Diverse Needs of Ethnically Diverse Students and Promoting Support of Diversity Among all Students

Section 4 provides an assessment of school practices and procedures relevant to supporting the diverse needs of students, including those who are ethnically diverse, and the level of engagement and collaboration with parents and other relevant external agencies.

Please note: This section will help determine the strengths and areas for improvement, in school practice and procedures, regarding student access to opportunities and resources to best support students well-being and educational needs.

Glossary of terms

An Aboriginal person: This term is used to refer to a person who is:
a) is a descendent of the First Peoples of Canada;
b) identifies as a First Nations, Inuit, or Metis person.

Ethnic Diversity or Ethnically Diverse is used to refer to racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and/or linguistic diversity.

Race-based discrimination behaviours or practices that result in avoidable and unfair inequalities across groups in society based on race, ethnicity, culture or religion [41].

Direct discrimination: *Unequal treatment* that results in unequal power, resources or opportunities across different groups [41]

Indirect discrimination: *Equal treatment* that results in unequal power, resources or opportunities across different groups [41]

Racism: a phenomenon that results in avoidable and unfair inequalities in power, resources or opportunities across groups in society, based on race, ethnicity, culture or religion. Racism can be expressed through beliefs, prejudices or behaviours/practices. Racism is about unfair actions, regardless of whether these action are intended or not [42].

Internalised race-based discrimination: when an individual accepts attitudes, beliefs or ideologies about the superiority of other groups and/or the inferiority of their own racial, ethnic, cultural or religious group [41]

Interpersonal race-based discrimination: interactions between people that result in avoidable and unfair inequalities across different racial, ethnic, cultural or religious groups [41]

Institutional/systemic race-based discrimination: requirements, conditions, practices, policies or processes that result in avoidable and unfair inequalities across different racial, ethnic, cultural or religious groups [41]

Anti-racism/anti-discrimination: behaviours or practices that attempt to address race-based inequities and create equal power, resources or opportunities across different groups.

Please note: In the following audit, the term 'ethnic diversity or ethnically diverse' is inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, as well as people of other racial, ethnic, cultural, religious and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, when using the term Aboriginal peoples this term is specifically referring to persons who identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Metis.

School-based audit for assessing school policies, practices, and procedures that support diversity and address race-based discrimination

Background Information

Background Information	
❖ Name of school	
❖ Approximate number of school staff	
❖ Approximate number of students	
❖ Staff Members present for audit	
❖ Date of audit	

Comments:

Section 1: Assessing Current School Practice and Procedures

Instructions: After reading each question as a group, please place a mark in the response box which most reflects the groups answer. You are then asked to provide indicators and further explain your answer.

SCHOOL PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES				
Question	Yes	No	Indicators: Supporting documents, programs, policies (please list)	Further Explanations & Recommendations for Action (elaborate on your answer)
The Enrolment Process				
1. Does the school collect background information, at enrolment, about new students? (E.g. to identify student's country of origin, Aboriginal background, students educational history, visa category)				
2. Does the school collect reports and information from English Language Schools/Centres regarding new enrolment? (E.g. information on students educational progress, details of past educational experiences)				
3. If you answered yes to question1 & 2 please answer the following: a. Does the school enable relevant teaching staff to access this information (background information about students, information from ESL schools) so they may be better informed about the needs and issues of students?				

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Professional Development for Staff

4. Please identify if the school provides the following types of training or professional development for staff:		
a. Cross-cultural or cultural competency training.		
b. Training which aims to increase participant's awareness of their own attitudes and beliefs.		
c. Training to assist staff in understanding the experiences of ethnically/religiously diverse students (e.g. experiences of refugee students), issues that may be effecting such students, and their needs (e.g. Islamic students fasting during Ramadan).		
d. Professional development for school personnel who teach curriculum related to ethnically diverse groups (e.g Aboriginal peoples).		
e. Access to resources, and/or training, informing staff of appropriate terminology to use when interacting with, and teaching about Aboriginal peoples.		
f. Professional learning to support improved practice in English as a Second Language learners.		
g. Training in working with interpreters.		

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5. If the school does provide training to staff, please answer the following questions:

   a. Who is this training provided to? (all teachers, new staff, admin staff)

   b. Is training provided on a continuous or one-off basis? (please specify the training).

   c. Is training compulsory or optional?

6. To what extent does the school support its staff in recognizing and addressing issues of race-based discrimination:

   a. Have school staff received training to assist them in recognizing race-based discrimination?

   b. Have school staff received training to inform them of what to do if witnessing, or receiving complaints of, race-based discrimination, and their responsibilities?

   c. Does the school have guidelines on how to resolve conflicts with or among students?

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SCHOOL CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY AND PROGRAMS

Question	Yes	No	Indicators: Supporting documents, programs, policies (please list)	Further Explanations & Recommendations for Action (elaborate on your answer)
7. Have curriculum resource been evaluated to ensure they do not contain stereotypes, prejudices and generalizations about ethnically diverse groups?				
8. Does the school curriculum actively: a. Discuss, challenge and counter race-based discrimination, prejudice, and stereotypes? b. Promote understandings of the impacts of race-based discrimination and stereotyping?				
9. Does the school curriculum provide opportunities for students to: a. Learn about and take the perspective of ethnically diverse people? b. Promote understanding of diversity?				
10. Does the curriculum contain Aboriginal peoples history?				
11. Does the school curriculum include cooperative learning techniques and approaches?				

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12. Does the school have a mentoring, peer support, or buddy system to support individual students at risk of exclusion?				
13. Does the school currently run any activities/programs with the aim of enhancing social connectedness of diverse students and promoting positive relationship between students of various ethnic backgrounds?				
14. Does the school staff consult with Aboriginal individuals/organizations when selecting Aboriginal books/teaching resources?				
15. Do songs, games, book, posters, films, photos, etc. represent a diverse range of people and cultures, including Aboriginal cultures?				
16. Does the school have books in multiple languages available to students?				

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SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, ETHOS, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Question	Yes	No	Indicators: Supporting documents, programs, policies (please list)	Further Explanations & Recommendations for action (elaborate on your answer)
School Structures				
17. Are equity or diversity principles included within the school's mission statement?				
18. Does the school have a committee or other forum to support ethnically diverse students?				
19. To what extent are student representative bodies, such as the student council/student leadership, reflective of the ethnic diversity of the school community?				
20. Does the school workforce reflect the ethnic diversity of the student population?				
School Ethos and Environment				
21. Does the school have visual displays (i.e. posters) that portray positive images of ethnically diverse people and convey many cultures, lifestyles, historical experiences, and individual achievements?				
22. Does the school regularly monitor common areas, such as notice boards and washrooms, to detect and remove offensive graffiti?				

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Question		
23. Is respect shown to Aboriginal peoples through:		
a. Consulting with Aboriginal communities in relation to culturally appropriate programs and practices?		
b. Is an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land displayed at school?		
24. Does the school have a suitable space(s) for all students, for quiet prayer or contemplation?		
25. Does the school cafeteria offer culturally appropriate food? (e.g. halal, vegetarian, etc.)		
26. Does the school uniform code take into account possible clothing requirements for people of various faiths and religions?		
a. Do sporting clothes requirements allow people to cover up in accordance with their beliefs?		
27. Does the school have a cultural diversity policy that you are aware of?		*if yes please complete Section 2
28. Does the school have a policy on race-based discrimination or anti-racism policy that you are aware of?		*if yes please complete Section 2

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MONITORING AND REPORTING INCIDENTS OF RACE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

Question	Yes	No	Indicators: Supporting documents, programs, policies (please list)	Further Explanations & Recommendations for action (elaborate on your answer)
Incidents of Race-based Discrimination				
29. Does the school have a well-published code of conduct linked to a Behaviours Policy that specifies what race-based discrimination is?				
a. Does the code of conduct outline the consequences that will apply if people engage in racially discriminatory behaviours?				
30. Does the school encourage student involvement in regular discussion about the school's Code of Conduct/Behaviour Policy and what should be in it?				
31. Does the school have a method of recording the details of any incidents of race-based discrimination that staff are encouraged to use?				
Complaints Resolution Process				
32. Does the school keep a record of the ethnic groups involved in racial-discrimination and note any action(s) taken?				
33. Does the school have procedures in place for offering immediate support to the target or victim and informing their parents or carers?				
34. Does the school have procedures in place for discouraging, counselling and/or re-educating perpetrators and informing their parents/carers?				

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35. Does the school encourage staff to discuss ways of tackling harassment, verbal abuse, bullying, fighting and other unacceptable behaviours in a firm yet non-confrontational way?		

Section 1: Assessing Current School Practice and Procedures – Priorities for Action

	Priority
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices around our enrollment processes?	1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low...............High
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices in terms of providing, making available, professional development for staff?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low...............High
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices in terms of supporting FNMI students and their families at our school?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low...............High

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Section 2: Assessing School Policy (e.g. multicultural, equal opportunities, anti-racism policy)

Note: The following section refers to policies which are related to addressing race-based discrimination, and supporting cultural diversity. Edmonton Public Schools should assess the **Edmonton Public School Board's** *Multicultural Education Policy*, and then any subsequent policies the school may have developed.

POLICY CONTENT AND USE	Yes	No	Indicators: Supporting documents, programs, policies (please list)	Further Explanations & Recommendations for action (elaborate on your answer)
Question				
Does the Multicultural Education (or other) policy:				
1. Clearly and explicitly state the school commitment to addressing race-based discrimination and to supporting cultural diversity?				
2. Address various forms and levels of race-based discrimination (e.g. individual, interpersonal, systemic)?				
3. Commit staff to delivering a curriculum that raises students' awareness of cultural, social, historical and political issues and encourages attitudes towards difference and diversity?				
4. Clearly outline the procedures and consequences that apply if staff or students do not adhere to the requirements of the policy?				

5. Promote staff recruitment practices designed to ensure that the schools' staff are representative of the school community members it serves?		
6. Commit the school to student surveys, consultation with parents or other consultative mechanism to help highlight concerns or issues with school practice?		
Is the Multicultural Education (or other) Policy:		
7. Discussed and reviewed by those who are expected to implement it on a regular basis?		
8. Introduced to staff during induction, staff training, or other appropriate contexts?		
9. Introduced to students during enrollment, class time, or other appropriate contexts?		
10. Seen as realistic and achievable by staff?		
11. Available to parents and students in relevant community languages and in alternative formats (on-line)?		
12. Aligned with the school's overall mission and its strategic plans?		
13. Supported by the necessary resources? (e.g. strong leadership, training, funding)		

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14. Linked to an achievable action plan that clearly identifies who is responsible for each task or objective?				
15. Regularly monitored, reviewed and updated by the Edmonton Public District School Board?				
Turning policy into practice				
16. Does the policy actively inform the day-to-day life and work of the school?				
17. Does the school have a working group responsible for implementing the Multicultural Education policy?				
18. Does the policy actively inform planning, monitoring and self-assessment activities relating to school practice in terms of addressing race-based discrimination and supporting cultural diversity?				

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Section 2: Assessing School Policy (e.g. multicultural, equal opportunities, anti-racism policy) – Priorities for Action

Improving school policy around cultural diversity, multiculturalism, anti-racism.	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low................High
How high of a priority is it for our school community (staff, students, parents) to be aware of the Multicultural Education policy?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low................High
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve putting the Multicultural Education policy (or other policy) into action? i.e. creating a policy implementation plan?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low................High

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Section 3: Assessing School Practice in Terms of Monitoring, Reporting, and Addressing Incidents of Race-based Discrimination

INCIDENTS OF RACE-BASED DISCRIMINATION	
1. Are members of the school community (students, staff, parents, partner organizations) actively encouraged to speak to the school if they feel that they/others are discriminated against?	
Yes. Please explain _how_ the school encourages such action.	No. Please explain _why_ the school does not actively encourage such action and identify any barriers to doing so.
For example: • _New staff are informed of the procedures and processes for reporting complains/instance of race-based discrimination, are provided with the relevant key contacts and are encouraged to report any discrimination they experience or witness._ • _Teachers make class announcements to inform students that they should report any discrimination they experience or witness. A poster with the reporting process, procedures and key contacts is displayed in the classroom._	_For example:_ • _No, it is assumed that staff will automatically bring incidents of race-based discrimination to the schools attention; there is no need to encourage community members to do so._

2. Are incidents (e.g. verbal, physical abuse, etc.) and complaints of race-based discrimination recorded?

Yes, how?	No. Please explain why not and barriers to doing so.
For example: • *Yes. Data on complaints of race-based discrimination are collected and monitored.*	*For example:* • *No incidents of race-based discrimination are recorded.* • *No incidents (e.g. verbal, physical) are recorded altogether; incidents of race-based discrimination are not distinguished from other incidents. It is difficult to distinguish between racially based incidents and other incidents.*

3. How are incidents (e.g. verbal, physical abuse, etc.) defined as being incidents of race-based discrimination?

Please explain.

For example:
• *It is up to the teacher to decide whether or not such an incident constitutes as race-based discrimination.*
• *The school has a definition of race-based discrimination which is used to judge whether or not incidents are deemed as such.*
• *Students report that an incident is racially based and such incidents are considered as such by teachers.*

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4. What is the process for reporting incidents of race-based discrimination and who deals with such reports?

Please explain. Include in your response the reporting process for both students and school staff.

For example:

- *Students would report to a teacher.*
- *Students are to report incidents of discrimination to certain teachers.*
- *In regards to teachers, a teacher would make a formal written complaint to the principal.*

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COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

1. What are the processes and procedures for dealing with instances of race-based discrimination?

Please explain how complaints of race-based discrimination against students and staff are addressed, in particular, any processes or procedures for dealing with such instances. Who is involved in the process?

For example:

- *The parents of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) of the race-based discrimination are informed of the incident and are involved in the complaints resolution process.*
- *The incident is dealt with 'in-house'.*
- *Incidents are addressed by the principal who decides on the appropriate action.*

2. Are all incidents of race-based discrimination addressed in the same manner and treated equally?

Please explain.

For example:

- *All incidents are addressed in the same manner, e.g. the perpetrator of the discrimination are always given a detention.*

Section 3: Assessing School Practice in Terms of Monitoring, Reporting, and Addressing Incidents of Race-based Discrimination – Priorities for Action

How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practice in terms of monitoring and reporting incidents of race-based discrimination?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low.............High
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices in terms of the complaints resolution process for incidents of race-based discrimination?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low.............High

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Section 4: Supporting the Diverse Needs of Ethnically Diverse Students and Promoting Support of Diversity Among Students.

SCHOOL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURES				
Question	**Yes**	**No**	**Indicators: Supporting documents, programs, policies (please list)**	**Further Explanations & Recommendations for action (elaborate on your answer)**
Supporting Students in Transition				
1. Does the school run an orientation program to welcome new students?				
Interpreters, Translations, and Multicultural Education Aids				
2. Does the school have access to English as a Second Language (ESL) funding to support ESL students?				
3. Does the school use either school based interpreters or interpreters from other organizations?				
b. Does the school have a system for booking interpreters if needed?				
4. If the school uses interpreters, are students and parents asked about the preferred gender and ethnicity of interpreters prior to booking?				
5. Does the school utilize multicultural education aids/ intercultural liaison workers to support student learning?				

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SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, ETHOS, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Question	Yes	No	Indicators: Supporting documents, programs, policies (please list)	Further Explanations & Recommendations for action (elaborate on your answer)
School Ethos and Environment				
6. Does the school have signs and notices in the languages of the school community members?				
7. Does the school:				
a. Celebrate or acknowledge significant cultural and religious holidays?				
b. Organize activities to celebrate the cultural diversity of the student population? (e.g. cultural days, mural project)				
c. Participate in community festivals and events?				
8. Are opportunities provided for staff and students to visit culturally significant places? (e.g. Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, Aboriginal sites)				
9. Has the school sought to gain an understanding of how ethnically diverse students feel about your school?				
10. If you answered yes to Q9, does the school have strategies in place seeking to address feedback provided by ethnically diverse students?				

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Partnerships with Agencies

11. Are school personnel aware of ethnically diverse-related community service agencies? (E.g. immigrant services agencies, Bent Arrow, the Centre for Race and Culture, etc.)			
12. Does the school maintain an up-to-date database of appropriate support and referral agencies for ethnically diverse people, with adequate contact information?			
13. Does the school consult with organizations, or outside experts who represent ethnically diverse groups in the communities in the following instances: a. For assistance in the design and implementation of curriculum related to ethnically diverse people? b. Before finalizing programs and/or policies that may have an impact upon ethnically diverse school community members?			

School curriculum, Pedagogy and Programs

14. Do curriculum resources highlight shared values across culture and belief systems?			
15. Do curriculum resources show the contribution of all cultures and societies to human achievement, for example, technology, science, art?			
16. Does the school provided students with the opportunity to learn languages other than English?			

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| | | a. What languages are offered?
b. What form of language learning is offered (e.g. after school programming, immersion, etc.)
c. Why are the particular languages on offer? |
| | | 17. Are curriculum resources about ethnically diverse people contemporary? |

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Question	Yes	No	Indicators: Supporting documents, programs, policies (please list)	Further Explanations & Recommendations for action (elaborate on your answer)
Informing/consulting and involving parents/guardians				
18. Does the school try to ensure that all parents, are made to feel welcome and included in the school community? a. How so?				
19. Does the school actively encourage interaction between all parents/guardians such as through the provisions of activities, events or programs?				
20. How does the school communicate with parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? For example, is communication made through multilingual school newspapers, phone calls, face-to-face meetings?				

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21. Do parents, including those who are ethnically diverse, understand their role, rights and responsibilities in supporting their child(ren) in school?			
22. Are all parents provided with the opportunities to be consulted in relation to their child's progress and encouraged to seek advice on their child's progress?			
23. Are parents consulted when the school is planning programs for students, information sessions, or special days? a. If so, how does the school attempt to make sure all parents have the opportunity to be involved?			
24. Are all parents encouraged to be actively involved in school structures such as parent's council? a. How does the school attempt to gain the involvement of ethnically diverse parents?			

Section 4: Supporting the Diverse Needs of Ethnically Diverse Students and Promoting Support of Diversity Among Students – Priorities for Action

How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices in terms of supporting students who transition into our school?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low..................High
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices in terms of using interpreters, translations, and multicultural education aids/consultants?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low..................High
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices in terms of creating culturally and linguistically supportive school and classroom environments?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low..................High
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices in terms of better supporting partnerships with agencies in the Edmonton community?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low..................High
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices in terms of curriculum content and delivery?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low..................High
How high of a priority is it for our school to improve our practices in terms of building and supporting relationships with parents/guardians?	*Priority* 1 2 3 4 5 N/A Low..................High

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Appendix B.

Information Letter and Consent Form

SFU SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
THINKING OF THE WORLD

Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive, Burnaby,
BC Canada V5A 1S6

Letter of Information

Study Name: Building off school strengths - A pilot study evaluating a school-based audit tool assessing school policies, procedures, and practices that support diversity and address race-based discrimination

Student Researcher: Kaitlin Lauridsen
Student Co-Supervisors: Dr. Lorraine Halinka Malcoe and Dr. Marina Morrow

I ask that you please review this letter of information about my thesis research and the consent form. You can keep the letter of information portion for your own records.

Introduction:
Thank-you for your interest in my research project. I am conducting this research for my thesis as part of my Masters in Public Health degree at Simon Fraser University. This research project is under the permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board and the Edmonton Public School Board Research Ethics. If you have an questions about your rights as a participant, the responsibilities of the researcher, or other concerns, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics.

Study Background:
The purpose of this research project is to pilot and evaluate a school-based audit tool for assessing current school policies, practices, and procedures that support diversity and address race-based discrimination in your school. More specifically, this research project aims to uncover if a school-based audit tool is an effective means for initiating critical reflection and discussion about diversity and race-based discrimination within the school setting, and evaluate if the tool is effective at promoting readiness for action to support diversity and inclusive education practices.

Your Participation:
You will be asked to participate in the implementation and evaluation of the audit tool. This will consist of answering the series of question the audit asks with a working group of other staff from your school. It is unclear at this point how long this will take, although it is estimated it will take between two to five hours. You will be also asked to participate in two focus groups, one prior to conducting the audit, and one afterwards. The focus groups will be conducted over a lunch hour and will be audio recorded with your permission.

Risks:
There are no direct risks from taking part in this research, however because racism and discrimination are sometimes sensitive topics, you may feel uncomfortable discussing some issues. You may also find it risky to disclose information in the chance that someone reading the findings may identify you. Please know that all identifying information such as personal details will never be included in any outputs of this project, unless you choose to have your name acknowledge in the "acknowledgements" section. If so, then this is the **only** place your name will appear in outputs from the project.

Benefits:
You will hopefully find it beneficial working through the audit tool as a strategy for learning how to better support diversity and address discrimination within your school. The final copy of the report will hopefully be beneficial to you and your school at creating a more inclusive and equitable learning and working environment.

Remuneration:
You will receive a small token of appreciation at the end of the project as a thank-you for your participation.

Anonymity
You will not be able to remain anonymous in this project as you will be working in a team to complete the audit tool.

Participant Rights & Confidentiality:
Participation in this study is voluntary. You have several rights as a participant in a study, they are to: (1) refuse to answer any question at any time; (2) withdraw from the research at any time without penalty; (3) withdraw from the research by contacting myself; and (4) gain access to the findings by requesting a copy of the final report.

As said above, all the information you provide during the pre and post-audit focus groups will be treated as confidential. Myself, and my two co-supervisors will be the only people with access to the focus group recordings and transcripts. I will be responsible for keeping original notes and recordings in a secure location. Data will be kept for five years before it is then disposed of.

Excerpts of the focus groups may be made part of the final research report and resulting publications. However, your real name, and name of the school will never be cited next to a quote, or in the document, unless you wish to have your name in the "acknowledgements" section. Use of a pseudonym will minimize any risk of you being identified by those reading or hearing about this project and maintain confidentiality of your identity as a participant.

Contact:
If you have any questions or concerns about the study, or your role as a participant in the study, please contact:

>**My senior supervisor:**
>Marina Morrow:

or

>**Director, Office of SFU Research Ethics:**
>Dr. Hal Weinberg:

Thank-you for your time!

KAITLIN LAURIDSEN
Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC Canada V5A 1S6

Consent Form

Study Name: Building off school strengths – A pilot project evaluating a school-based audit tool to assess policies, practices, and procedures that support diversity and address race-based discrimination.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received the study's Letter of Information which describes the procedures, whether there are possible risk and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, ask any questions you may have, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

▄▄ ▄▄

Having been asked to participate in the research study named above, I certify that I have read the procedures specified in the above Letter of Information. I understand the procedures to be used in this study and the personal risks to me in taking part in the study as described above. I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time.

By consenting to participate in the focus group, I confirm that any information I encounter will be kept confidential and not revealed to parties outside the focus group. Although the objective is to maintain confidentiality, it cannot be guaranteed.

I understand the risks and contributions of my participation in this research and agree to participate:

_____
Participant Name (please print)

_____
Participant Signature

_____
Date

Please check:

☐ I would like to have my name acknowledge in the publication. Your name will be acknowledged in the "acknowledgements" section of the final report.

☐ I would like to receive a copy of final report. If yes, please write the preferred contact information (e-mail, mail) below.

Appendix C.

"Building of School Strengths" – Staff Questionnaire

Building off School Strengths - Staff Questionnaire

We are encouraging all school staff to complete the **"Building off School Strengths" staff questionnaire** as part of the **Building off School Strengths** project. It is a very important questionnaire and your input is needed. It should take about **10 minutes to complete**.

This questionnaire is part of a larger Masters' research project that looks at how school policies, practices, and procedures support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination[1].

- The questionnaire is anonymous and **strictly confidential**. I will be the only person with access to the responses.

- **Participation is voluntary**. You may choose not to complete this questionnaire.

- This research has been approved by the Simon Fraser University Ethics Board, and the Edmonton Public School Board ethics review.

- **By completing** this questionnaire you **are agreeing** to have your anonymous responses incorporated into the research and written up in my thesis.

For more information:
If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire or your participation in the research project please contact:

- **Researcher:** Kaitlin Lauridsen

- **Director, Office of SFU Research Ethics:** Dr. Hal Weinberg

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Please return the questionnaire to the envelope and seal the envelope upon completion. Sealed envelopes are to be placed in the letter box in the office. Thank you for completing this very important questionnaire.

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[1] *The term 'race-based discrimination' refers to behaviours and practices that treat members of a group unfairly based on their race, ethnicity, or culture, and includes discrimination against Aboriginal Peoples.*

SECTION ONE: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT, SCHOOL TRAINING, BEHAVIOURS, AND BELIEFS

For the following questions, please check [√] the box that BEST corresponds to your answer. Please check ONE box for every statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT					
1. My school is committed to providing a workplace environment that is welcoming, safe, and inclusive for *staff* from varied racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. My school is committed to providing an environment that is welcoming, safe, and inclusive for *students* from varied racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Within my school, there are adequate policies, practices, and procedures in place to address race-based discrimination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Race-based discrimination is a problem in my school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Race-based discrimination is a problem in the community in which my school is located.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
SCHOOL TRAINING					
6. My school provides sufficient cultural diversity training.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. My school provides sufficient anti-racism training.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I would participate in cultural diversity/anti-racism training if provided.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I am familiar with the Edmonton School Board's Multicultural Education Policy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I am familiar the Edmonton School Board's Aboriginal Education Policy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. There are sufficient opportunities to formally discuss issues of racial and cultural diversity in my school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
BEHAVIOURS					
12. Within my school, there are clear negative consequences for *staff* engaging in race-based discriminatory behaviour.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Within my school, there are clear negative consequences for *students* engaging in race-based discriminatory behaviour.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
BELIEFS					
14. Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity are beneficial to a school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Schools with little or no racial, ethnic, or cultural diversity are more harmonious.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Schools should play an important role in supporting racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. I believe my school adequately addresses race-based discrimination through *school policies*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. I believe my school adequately addresses race-based discrimination through *school practices*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. I feel confident in my ability to deal with a racist incident involving a *student* at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. I feel confident in my ability to deal with a racist incident involving a *co-worker* at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

COMMENTS: (Please provide any additional comments, such as example trainings. Further elaborations on any questions are welcome.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION THREE: COMMENTS

Please feel free to provide any additional comments on the broad topic of cultural diversity or race-based discrimination within your school.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION TWO: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. How do you identify your gender?

   _____ .

2. How do you identify your racial, ethnic, or cultural background? You may have more than answer.

   _____ .

3. In what country were you born?

   _____ .

4. If you were not born in Canada, how long have you lived here?
   _____ years and _____ months.

5. What languages do you speak other than English?

   _____ .

6. What is your current position at the school?

   ⭕ Teaching Staff   ⭕ Other Position

   ⭕ Administration Staff

   ⭕ Support Staff

7. How long have you worked as a staff member at the school?

   ⭕ Less than 2 years

   ⭕ Between 2 and 5 years

   ⭕ More than 5 but less than 10 years

   ⭕ More than 10 but less than 20 years

   ⭕ More than 20 years

Appendix D.

Pre and Post Focus Group Guide

Pre-Audit Focus Group Question

1. What are some of the initiatives and activities that the school currently does to support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination?

- For students? (activity days, history months, acknowledgements, disciplinary actions)
- Staff? (trainings, booklets, time with intercultural consultants/liaison workers, equity hiring practices)
- Parents? (newsletter in multiple languages, translators)

2. What opportunities currently exist for staff to formally discuss issues related to cultural diversity and race-based discrimination?

3. What do you see as the strengths in current school policy, practices, and procedures towards supporting cultural diversity and addressing race-based discrimination? Weaknesses?

4. What opportunities currently exist to support cultural diversity in the school? Opportunities currently exist to support actions to address race-based discrimination?

5. What barriers currently exist in supporting cultural diversity in the school? Barriers to action in addressing race-based discrimination?

6. How important is it for this school to support cultural diversity and examine race-based discrimination?

7. How do you define cultural diversity? How do you define race-based discrimination? How does the way you defined these terms relate or differ from how the school or school District defines these terms?

Post-Audit Focus Group Questions

1. What are some of your general thoughts on the audit tool and the audit process?

- How could the process be improved?
- Do you think others should have been sitting at the table?
- What stood out the most for you when you were completing the audit?

2. What do you see as the strengths and weakness in school policies, practices, and procedures towards supporting cultural diversity and addressing race-based discrimination?

- Do you think the tool was able to help identify areas of strengths and weaknesses?

3. Did anyone discuss the audit tool with other staff not involved in the process?

- What did you talk about?

4 How would you like to see the school move forward with the information and experience the group has gained from participating in the audit?

- Are any of you willing to do work to further ideas/suggestions that have come out of the process?

5. What would be the next steps to move forward? What would be needed (resources, support, etc.)?

6. After completing the audit tool, how important do you think it is for this school to support cultural diversity and address race-based discrimination? Has this changed at all since prior to the audit?

Appendix E.

School Audit Tool Results Report Cards

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AUDIT TOOL REPORT

YELLOWHEAD JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	School Address: Phone:

Principal: Assistant Principal:	School Student Population Number of Total Students:

TOPICS

The Enrollment Process	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • Student enrollment information is collected and stored on PinPoint (online student record database) • More information is needed as to what exact information is collected to make further recommendations to improve this process **Suggested Next Steps:** • Ensure all staff are made aware of PinPoint, how to use it, and are informed when and how it should be used
Professional Development for Staff	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • There appears to be very little (some PD for supporting ELL) staff PD around supporting cultural diversity • No training on how to recognize and act upon incidents or complaints of race-based discrimination **Suggested Next Steps:** • Regular and formal (cultural competency/anti-racism) training for all staff • Training on how to identify and respond to incidents of race-based discrimination • PD session on working with interpreters
School Curriculum and Programs *it was acknowledge that curriculum is set at the provincial level	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • Curriculum provides opportunity for cooperative learning, understanding of diverse perspectives, learning about Aboriginal peoples history, however it is teacher dependent how topics are approached and taught • A number of programs available to students that provide mentoring and promote positive relationship building (eg. Bamboo Shield, Girls Zone, Advisory Groups) • The school has books in multiple languages (Arabic) available to students **Suggested Next Steps:** • Continue to support mentorship programs and programs that encourage positive intercultural contact and positive relationship building between students • Continue working to acquire more books in multiple languages for students • Provide opportunities for staff to share best teaching practices around cooperative learning, perspective taking, anti-racism and multicultural teaching techniques
School Structure	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • Student leadership/council reflects the ethnic diversity of the school community • School mission statement includes diversity principles • Non-representative workforce of student population

	Suggested Next Steps: • Encourage staff to continue to support diverse students to take leadership roles within the school
School Ethos and Environment	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • School is culturally sensitive in terms of food, dress, and prayer space • School has some visual displays representing the diversity of the school • Multicultural Education Policy exists at Board level, however it is unclear how the ME Policy is taken up within the school **Suggested Next Steps:** • Review the multicultural education policy with staff and integrate policy into school practice • Create a school sub-committee to review equity and diversity practices within the school and ensure best practices to support diverse learners
Monitoring and Reporting Incidents of Race-based Discrimination	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • Code of conduct/behaviour policy does not define 'race-based discrimination' or outline clear consequences for racially discriminatory behaviour • There is a method in place for recording incidents (Log Book) although no guidelines as to what should be recorded and follow-up protocol • It is unclear if there are formal procedures in place to support victims of discrimination and counsel perpetrators **Suggested Next Steps:** • Add definition of 'race-based discrimination' to code of conduct along with clear steps and consequences for discriminatory behaviour • Ensure clear understanding of what is to be recorded in log book and follow-up procedures after recording
Partnerships with Parents/ Guardians	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • Identified that some white parents have acknowledged to staff that they do not feel welcome at certain school events (e.g. Grade 9 Farewell, Taste of the Middle East) • Mass communication with parents is solely in English • Language and cultural barriers prevent many parents from understanding their rights and responsibilities in supporting their child(s) school **Suggested Next Steps:** • Consider holding a facilitated community dialogue for parents • Need better communication with parents (consider greater use of translators, and providing resources (call outs, newspaper) in majority languages) • Ask on enrollment forms preferred language of communication

KEY PRIORITY AREAS

It was identified as a high priority for the school to improve their practices in terms of supporting FNMI students and their families within the school. It was felt this group is at highest risk for feeling excluded. It was also identified that the school needs better communication with parents. Since many parents are ESL, it is suggested that the school seek to provide resources and information in languages other than English and that staff know how to access translators. To continue the work towards equity and inclusion, it is suggested that a sub-committee be formed to review equity and diversity practices within the school. This sub-committee could be responsible for implementing some of the listed suggested next steps, organizing PD, and sharing best practices with other staff.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AUDIT TOOL REPORT

PRAIRIE ROSE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	School Address: Phone:
Principal: **Assistant Principal:**	**School Student Population** Number of Total Students: 345

TOPICS

The Enrollment Process	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • Current enrollment form collects good student background information all stored on Power School Now system **Suggested Next Steps:** • Ensure all staff know how to access and best use the information • Staff in-service on using the ELL checklists
Professional Development for Staff	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • There is some PD provided (awareness training, support for working with ELL), however there seems to be a need for more formal training in some areas • Currently no staff training on how to recognize and act upon incidents or complaints of race-based discrimination **Suggested Next Steps:** • Regular and formal training for working with culturally diverse (especially FNMI and refugee) learners (e.g. cultural competency training) • Staff training on how to identify and respond to incidents of race-based discrimination • PD session on working with interpreters
School Curriculum and Programs ***it was acknowledge that curriculum is set at the provincial level**	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • Curriculum provides opportunity for cooperative learning, understanding of diverse perspectives, learning about Aboriginal peoples history, however it is teacher dependent how topics are approached and taught • A number of programs available to students that provide mentoring and promote positive relationship building (eg. Bamboo Shield, Girls Group, Soccer Academy) • Chinese and French books available to students **Suggested Next Steps:** • Provide opportunities for staff to share best teaching practices around cooperative learning, perspective taking, anti-racism and multicultural teaching techniques • Provide more books in multiple languages • Continue to support mentorship programs and programs that encourage positive intercultural contact and positive relationship building between students
School Structure	**Strengths/Weaknesses:**

	• Non-representative workforce of student population • Student leadership/council reflects the ethnic diversity of the school community • Mission statement does not include diversity or equity principles **Suggested Next Steps:** • Encourage staff to continue to support diverse students to take leadership roles within the school • Revise current mission statement to include diversity and equity principles
School Ethos and Environment	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • School creates a culturally appropriate environment through provisions of: prayer rooms, culturally appropriate food, dress code, and visual displays of diverse peoples • Multicultural Education Policy exists at Board level, however it is unclear how the ME Policy is taken up within the school **Suggested Next Steps:** • Review the multicultural education policy with staff and integrate policy into school practice • Create a school sub-committee to review equity and diversity practices within the school and ensure best practices to support diverse learners
Monitoring and Reporting Incidents of Race-based Discrimination	**Strengths/Weaknesses:** • Code of conduct/behaviour policy does not define 'race-based discrimination' or outline clear consequences for racially discriminatory behaviour • There is a method in place for recording incidents (Log Book) • Administration has procedures for supporting victims of discrimination and counselling perpetrators **Suggested Next Steps:** • Add definition of 'race-based discrimination' (see audit tool for list of definitions) to code of conduct along with clear steps and consequences for discriminatory behaviour • Ensure clear understanding across all staff of what is to be recorded in log book and follow-up procedures after recording

KEY PRIORITY AREAS
The working group identified that it is a high priority for the school to improve their practices in terms of supporting FNMI students and their families within the school. There is an immediate need to fill the Aboriginal success coach position within the school. Staff highlighted it would be beneficial to receive more PD on cultural competency training for working with FNMI students and families.

To continue the work towards equity and inclusion, it is suggested that a sub-committee be formed to review equity and diversity practices within the school. This sub-committee could be responsible for implementing some of the listed suggested next steps, organizing PD, and sharing best practices with other staff.